

love on film

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love on film

by [havocrat](#)

Summary

“Your jaw is rougher than I imagined. It’s, like, *stubbly*, or whatever.”

Without opening his eyes, Dream smiles under George’s soft hands. “Well, I haven’t shaved since this morning. Why were you imagining touching my face, anyway?”

George doesn’t reply, and maybe that’s what gives Dream the confidence to say what he says next.

“Maybe you should kiss me, too. Just to see if that lives up to your imagination.”

George arrives in Florida. It takes four days to film the meetup vlog, and only three for Dream to completely lose his mind.

Notes

this is for wolf. wolf, you are the biggest inspiration. you're the best person i know and such a wonderful friend. to me, you're, like, THE irl streamers mutual pining fic writer, so i decided to write one for you. i tried to include all your favourite things. i really hope you

like it otherwise i will cry.

big big thanks to my lovely beta readers [riv](#) and [jane](#) <3

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

George is in Florida.

Dream can hardly believe it, but it's true. George is in *Florida*. With Dream.

Okay, technically not *with* Dream. Right now he's at the airport, probably making Sapnap carry his suitcase out to the car, probably hugging him. They're probably laughing and smiling together. Sapnap is probably calling him *Gerge*, and he's probably giggling and replying *Yes, Surpnurp?* They're probably getting in the car, singing along to music. Maybe they're even playing "Heat Waves". Dream hopes they are.

But he has no way to know. He's at home, walking furious laps around his kitchen counter.

He's not pacing. He never does—something about the pivoting seems so unnatural and weird to him. So whenever his energy is burning a hole in his chest, threatening to spill over, he comes and walks laps around the counter.

He gets a little distracted and walks straight into the refrigerator. "Ow."

Patches, sitting a safe distance away, gives him a look that clearly says, *Get it together, man. Your best friend is coming to see you. So what?*

"Yeah, he's coming here. Now. He's gonna see my face. He's gonna live in my house."

Sapnap has seen your face, her eyes argue, and she brings a paw up to her face, licking it thoughtfully. *It didn't bother you then.*

"Ugh, that's different, okay, it's— George is— Well— Listen, I don't have to explain myself to you, okay?"

Sure. Whatever you say. She turns and walks away.

"You're being crazy," he snaps at her retreating form. Then he realizes, *Oh yeah, I'm the one standing alone in a kitchen, pretending to have a conversation with my cat.*

He checks Sapnap's location on his phone. He's still an hour away. Shit. Okay. He needs to find a better way to pass the time. One that gives him less bruises.

He ends up changing into running clothes and heading to the basement to run on the treadmill. Back in high school, he used to run outside. But when Sapnap moved in and started worrying about things like his safety, he bought a treadmill. The Florida heat is suffocating at the best of times; exercising in it isn't exactly the healthiest thing to do.

He's tried running outside once since high school, a year or two ago, and he ended up turning around after less than half a mile. When he got home, he took a freezing cold shower and drank about a gallon of water, and vowed to never run outside again.

As he runs (in the comfort of his air conditioning), he lets the world fall away, getting lost in the pounding of his own feet with every step. He runs hard and fast—anything less would leave too much room in his brain for thinking.

By the time the door swings open, he's run four miles, showered, and vacuumed the living room again (what if George thinks it's dirty?), and he's sitting on the couch, looking very sane and very normal.

Sapnap walks in first, carrying a camera, and then behind him is... is....

"Hello," Dream says, like a normal human being.

George freezes in the doorway, his bag falling to the ground at his side. "Dream?" he asks.

"Hello," Dream says again. He should probably think about coming up with something else to say.

Sapnap laughs. "Welcome home, Gogy."

Home. That knocks Dream right out of his head and back into the real world, and his best friend is right there, and he's been waiting for this moment for so long. He doesn't even register standing up but then he's rushing towards George and scooping him up into his arms. George unfreezes at the same moment and jumps to meet him, wrapping his arms and legs around Dream's waist and clinging to him like a koala.

Dream's brain short-circuits. He's known what George looks like for a while, but this is... this is so different. This is what George smells like, what George *feels* like. He'd always thought that George would be cold, but he's warm and real and human in Dream's arms, pressed up against him. And he's George. He's Dream's best friend in the entire world, and he's *here*, and Dream might actually explode.

One hand instinctively goes down to grab George's thigh, supporting his weight. For a second, Dream panics, because that's not usually how best friends hold each other, but George doesn't seem to mind. He just burrows his face in the crook of Dream's neck, inhaling deeply.

"You smell nice," George says, muffled by the fabric of Dream's shirt. His hair tickles Dream's chin.

"I showered."

George laughs into his neck, and Dream can feel his ribs expanding and contracting under his hand. *Holy fucking shit*, his brain intelligently provides. "I can tell. Your hair's all wet." And he reaches up to ruffle the damp strands. The brush of his fingers makes Dream's scalp go all tingly.

Dream just sighs contentedly, holding George tighter against him. Each moment is better than the last, and he can't help thinking, *I'll never let go of this. I'll never let go of you.*

"Uh, Dream?"

"Hm?"

"Are you going to put me down?"

"I wasn't planning on it."

From behind him, Dream can just barely hear Sapnap muttering something that sounds a lot like

fucking weirdos. He's definitely filming this for the meetup vlog, but Dream couldn't give less of a shit about the fans right now.

"Okay."

"Okay," Dream echoes. He squeezes George even tighter. *George George George George George*.

"Seriously though," George complains. "As much as I would like to stay here forever, I'm hungry. And I have to pee."

Dream huffs. "Fine." He sets the British boy down on the ground, wincing a little at the stiffness in his elbows. "You're heavy," he complains. "You hurt my arms."

"He's not heavy, you're just weak," Sapnap shoots back. He's over in the kitchen, rummaging through the fridge. The camera is off, sitting on the kitchen countertop for now. "What do you want to eat, George?"

George runs over to the counter and jumps up on it, sitting criss-cross on the granite. "I want McDonalds."

"Well, I don't. Clay and I had McDonalds like two days ago."

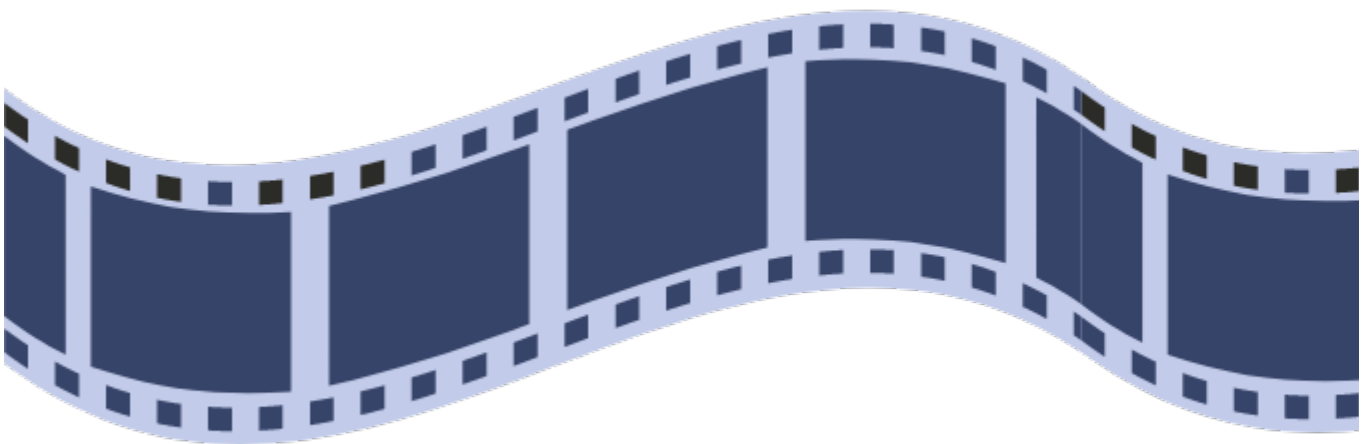
I would eat it again if that's what George wants, Dream almost says. Instead, he huffs, "George, get your damn shoes off my counter."

George ignores him. "What about pizza?"

"Sure, that's fine. Clay, order us a pizza."

George grins. He looks absolutely stunning. "Yeah, Dream. Order us a pizza."

Dream doesn't mind being ordered around. He would walk to the ends of the earth if George asked him to.



At dinner, Dream is painfully aware of two sets of eyes on him. The first are watching him with a sort of curious fascination, memorizing his every feature. The second are suspicious, scrutinizing.

“Nick, would you stop looking at me like that?” Dream hisses when George goes to the bathroom.

Sapnap crosses his arms. “Not until you explain what all that was earlier.”

“All *what*?”

Sapnap makes his voice all high-pitched and girly, and he clasps his hands together to coo, “*Oh Georgie, you’re so cute and sexy. Give me a hug.*” He unclasps his hands, tilting his head and switching to a British accent. “*No Dreamy, you are. Pick me up, Daddy.*”

Dream’s face burns. “That did not happen. We were just... saying hi. Didn’t you hug him?”

“I hugged him like he’s my best friend. I didn’t pick him up and spin him around like a pretty pretty princess.”

Dream buries his head in his arms. “*Sapnap.*”

“Listen, man, if you like George, I support you one hundred percent, you know that? You can share your feelings—”

“We are *not* having this conversation right now.” Dream lowers his voice. “I’m being completely normal. I’m not gonna do anything weird. We’re not talking about this anymore.”

“Dude, I don’t know how you plan to—”

“Talking about what?”

Dream whips around to where George is standing in the doorway. “Um. Just. Y’know.”

“No, I don’t know, actually.”

“Sandwiches,” Sapnap says. Dream nods gravely.

“Okay.” George sits back down. “Americans have terrible taste in sandwiches, anyway.”

“Well— That’s not even— It’s not like British people are any better,” Dream splutters. “What kind of monster puts corn in their sandwiches?”

“Tuna sweetcorn sandwiches are good, Dream. You would like one if you tried it.”

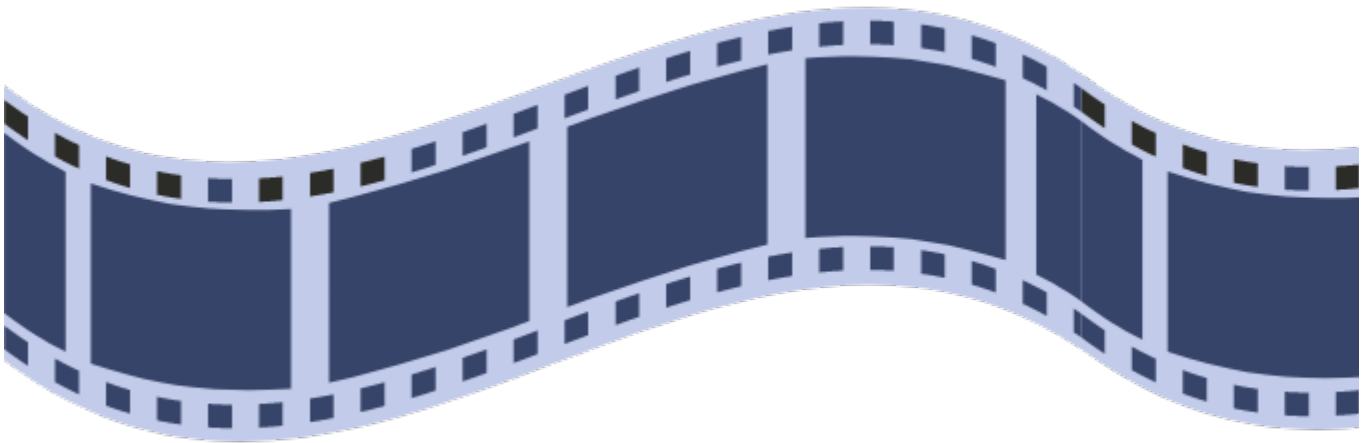
“Gross.” Dream shudders. “Good thing I’ll never eat that.”

George holds eye contact for a moment. “Not even if I asked you to?” His voice is uncharacteristically soft.

“Well, okay. I guess one sandwich couldn’t hurt.”

Sapnap is openly gaping at him. “You’re such a simp.”

He shrugs, stuffing another piece of pizza into his mouth to save himself from answering.



After dinner, Dream and Sapnap go to bed, and George goes to take a shower. Dream's laying in bed with the lights off, scrolling through Twitter on his phone when his door swings open.

He doesn't look up from his phone as the bed dips, and then George is climbing over him to sit criss-cross on top of the covers on the empty side of his bed. It's dark in the room, the only light coming in through the open curtains.

"Can I tell the fans you're in—" Dream cuts himself off as he finally catches a whiff of George's shampoo and his brain short-circuits. George's hair is a little wet from his shower, and he smells fresh and clean and sweet. He clears his throat. "—in, uh, in Florida?"

"Sure." George settles in next to him, leaning back against the headboard. He opens his own phone, and out of the corner of his eye, Dream sees him start scrolling through the "likes" page of his *Dream_Fanart* account. "Dream, what is this?"

Dream glances over, and sees a stunning depiction of him and George in a... *compromising* position. (Specifically, with his tongue down George's throat.) He grins. "Isn't it great?"

"Dream, why did you like this? You're so weird."

"Maybe I just want to recreate it with you," Dream jokes, sitting up in bed to make kissy noises at him. George ducks away, giggling. Dream finally gets a proper look at him, silhouetted in silvery moonlight, glowing with laughter and happiness. His heart does a funny little flip-flop. He ignores it and keeps teasing George, poking him and kissing the air around his head.

"Dream, stop," he laughs. "*Dream!* Cut it out," he shrieks, clutching his sides. "Stop *kissing* at me."

Satisfied, Dream returns to his pillow, and goes back to typing out the tweet he was working on. And... *send*. He watches the notification show up on George's screen, watches the gears in his head turning as he reads the tweet. Then, he turns around, grabs the other pillow, and starts bludgeoning Dream with it.

"Dream! What—" he punctuates each word with a hit of the pillow against Dream's head— "is—" *thwack* "wrong—" *thwack* "with you?"

He lets the pillow fall, and Dream can't hold back his giggles. He looks at George's phone, which he's waving around angrily, tweet still up on the screen.

dream @dreamwastaken

george is soooo heavy :/ i thought having him here would be nice but my arms are DYING from carrying him around bridal style all the time

"You said—" he cuts off with a wheeze— "you said I could tell the fans."

"Stop squeaking like that," George scolds, and Dream only wheezes harder.

When he finally manages to calm down, he's dizzy with exhaustion, worn out from the excitement of the day. "Did you need anything?" he asks, wanting George to be all set before he falls asleep on him. "Like, before you go to bed?"

"Oh, um." George turns his phone off and sets it on the side table. "I was just thinking about... our last sleep call. A few weeks ago. What we said."

"Oh." Dream squints as he thinks back. It was a while ago—they've been out of sync for at least two weeks. He can feel George studying his face, waiting for him to figure it out.

I like our sleep calls, George had mumbled. But I'd rather be with you in real life.

We can do that, Dream offered. Sleep call in real life once your visa gets approved.

At first, George was confused. What, like a sleepover?

Sure. Dream shrugged, even though George couldn't see him. We can bring your mattress in my room and finally go to sleep in the same place.

I could just go in your bed, George teased him. That way it's more convenient when you inevitably decide to suck my dick.

"Oh," Dream nods understandingly, and he can see the relief on George's face, right up until he says, "You want me to suck your dick."

"What— *Dream!*" George flops face-first onto the covers, probably to hide his blush. (It's no use. Dream knows it's there anyway.) "No, you nimrod," he huffs, barely audible through the thick comforter. "I want to have a—" his voice softens the tiniest bit— "sleepover."

George wants to sleep in my room. Gogmeister. GeorgeNotFound. George Henry Davidson. Wants to sleep here. In my room. With me in it. Dream is going to pass away. "Okay," he squeaks.

George lifts his head. "Okay?"

Dream clears his throat, but when he speaks again, it's still a little high-pitched. "Yeah, sure. That's fine with me. It's okay. I mean, um, I guess I don't really have anything *better* to do, so...."

George laughs and hits him, and Dream pulls back the covers as best as he can with George on top of them, motioning for him to climb in. George's laughter cuts off immediately. "You want me to— In your bed?"

He leans his head back onto the pillow, letting his eyes flutter shut. “Well, yeah. I mean, you can’t possibly be expecting me to suck your dick if you’re on a mattress on the floor, can you?”

“*Dream.*” He can’t see George’s face, but he knows exactly what it looks like just from his tone. After years of being on video calls with George, he practically knows George’s face better than his own.

He sinks lower down in the bed, pulling the covers all the way up to his chin. “Seriously, though. I’m not getting out of bed to drag an entire mattress in here, and I know you’re definitely not planning on it.”

“Duh. If I wanted to do it myself, I would have just walked in here with a mattress instead of asking you if I can sleep in here. I mean, obviously the answer was gonna be yes.” George flicks his forehead, and his eyes fly open.

He swats George’s hand away. “You’re so dumb. Get in bed.”

“*Get in the bed!*” George whisper-yells, imitating one of his favorite clips of Dream.

Dream opens his eyes now, smiling. “Dork. Just do it.”

He immediately regrets it because George pulls off his hoodie and his shirt, and he’s left only in flannel pajama bottoms. There’s so much *skin*—arms, shoulders, chest, stomach—this is bad. This is very, very bad. George turns around and catches sight of his face. “Oh, is this not...? I can put my shirt back on, if you want?”

“No, don’t!” Dream yelps. *Normal. Act normal.* He clears his throat. “I mean, um, it’s fine.” He closes his eyes again, because it’s significantly harder to remember what ‘normal’ is when George is half-naked in his bed. When George eventually slides in next to him, their bare arms brush, and Dream has to remind himself to breathe. “You tired?”

“Yeah.” George moves a little closer, and they lay side-by-side, arms pressed together. He’s radiating warmth (and more of that intoxicating George smell). “But... I dunno. I don’t want today to end. It’s been the best day I’ve had in a long time.” He laughs a little. “I know that’s kind of dumb. I mean, we didn’t even do anything, really.”

“It’s not dumb. And tomorrow’s gonna be even better,” Dream promises. He likes George better like this. Honest, off-camera. “You’re home now. Anything you want, anything you need, I’ll make it happen.”

“I need...” George leans closer to whisper in Dream’s ear. He pretends it doesn’t send shivers down his spine. “I need you... to edit my video.”

“Except for that.”

George groans and flops back down. They lay in silence for a moment before he sighs dramatically. “You’re being boring. Talk to me, or I’m going to fall asleep.”

“Would that be so terrible? It *is* bedtime.” George doesn’t respond, and Dream hums, eyes still closed. “You can talk to me, if you want. You can tell me what you think of America so far. Is the Dream Team house everything you imagined? What’s it like living with *the* DreamWasTaken?”

“Everything’s surprising. But it’s good-surprising. Y’know, you’ve got an okay face,” he says. “It’s... proportionate, I guess.”

Dream's too tired for this. "Proportionate?" He almost forgot that George saw him for the first time today. He didn't mention it at all until now.

"Y'know... symmetrical, and stuff."

"Pft. No it isn't." Dream knows his nose is a tiny bit crooked, one of his eyebrows is slightly longer than the other, and his mouth tends to quirk to one side when he's smiling or laughing. Symmetrical, he is not.

"Well, okay, that's not exactly what I meant. I just mean that it's, like... whatever. Forget it."

"Wait. George." He rolls onto his side, and when he meets George's eyes, he's already looking at him. "Are you trying to *compliment* me right now?" George's face is all the answer he needs. "You *are*! You think I'm hot."

"Dream—"

"You think I'm hot, and sexy, and the best-looking Minecraft Youtuber you've ever seen."

"*No*, I do *not*. I just meant that you're, you're conventionally attractive, is all. At best. You're not, like..." George trails off, rolling his eyes at the gigantic fucking grin on Dream's face. "Don't make it weird, Dream. I've never seen your face before today, I'm obviously going to tell you what I think of it. And I think it's a nice face. Or, um. An acceptable face."

"Weird?" Dream gives George his best *I'm not imagining our wedding right now* smile. Because he isn't. He definitely, definitely isn't. "What's weird? Everything is fine."

What color would George's suit be? It would probably be simple, elegant. They could take hundreds of pictures and show them to their kids every day. How many kids would they have? George said on stream once that he might like to have one or two kids. Dream would prefer two, so their kids would always have someone to play with. But if George—

"Dream." He's pulled out of his thoughts by George's admonishing tone. "I can *see* you getting all weird. You're like, having an aneurysm. I'm going to tweet *Dream is on his praise kink arc*."

"Don't you dare. You need to stay off Twitter and get some rest."

"I'm not even tired," George says, like a liar.

"I know what you need—a bedtime story." Dream winks. "Good thing I have the perfect one ready. Here, I'll tell it to you: Once upon a time, there was a sexy, sexy gamer boy, and his green Minecraft lover who happened to be the best player in the world..."

"Gross, Dream. You are not the best player in the world."

"But I am your lover?" he asks hopefully. George rolls onto his back, breaking eye contact.

"No."

"Oh! Speaking of lovers," he says. "When is your mom going to send over the rest of your stuff? I want to make sure we have a plan for when it arrives."

"How is that speaking of lovers?"

Dream scoffs. "Your mom is *my* lover. Duh. Keep up, George."

“What?” George huffs out a surprised laugh, looking at him again. “You’re an idiot. My mum is sending it this week, and it should take a week or two to arrive. So, we’ve got time.”

We’ve got time. It’s true, Dream realizes. “Yeah,” he breathes, eyes fixed on George’s side profile as he stares up at the ceiling. “We’ve got all the time in the world.”

George glances over, meeting his eyes. “You’re so sentimental,” he teases. “So corny.”

“Okay, well– Whatever, idiot. I wasn’t talking about our... our *life* together,” Dream says. “I was talking about your stuff.”

“Sure, Dream.” George smiles. “It’s okay to be happy. I’m happy too.”

“I just...” Dream huffs out a soft laugh. “I can’t believe you’re here.”

“Believe it.” George scoots closer, reaching out a hand to poke Dream’s cheek. “I can’t believe you have a face.”

“Believe it.”

George silently, carefully traces the lines of Dream’s face, fingers brushing tingly lines across his cheekbones, his jaw, the bridge of his nose.

He lets his eyes flutter shut. “Feels nice.”

“Your jaw is rougher than I imagined. It’s, like, *stubbly*, or whatever.”

Without opening his eyes, he smiles under George’s soft hands. “Well, I haven’t shaved since this morning. Why were you imagining touching my face, anyway?”

George doesn’t reply, and maybe that’s what gives Dream the confidence to say what he says next.

“Maybe you should kiss me, too. Just to see if that lives up to your imagination.”

George’s hands still. “Why would you *say* that?” His whisper is hoarse; scandalized.

Dream laughs out loud, but still, he keeps his eyes closed. It’s easier to talk to George this way—easier to pretend it’s another late night Discord call, to pretend he can’t feel George’s gentle touch against his jaw. “Well, you spent so long waiting to come here. I’m sure you imagined me greeting you in the airport with a bouquet of flowers and a big fat kiss on the lips—”

“No way. I imagined something a little more like...” George pauses thoughtfully. “You falling to the floor in shock, crying like a baby, going *George, George, you’re finally here! I love you so much!* But... I guess you don’t care about me enough to do all that.” His hands finally pull away.

Dream scoffs. “I’m gonna pretend you didn’t just say that last part.” He’s silent for a second. Then, “*I am* happy you’re here,” he confesses. “Even if I couldn’t meet you in the airport with flowers and I didn’t fall to the ground crying when I saw you. I do want you to be here.”

“I know. You’ve told me. You don’t have to say it again.”

“I want you to be here,” he repeats, just to be annoying. His eyes open and he grins up at the ceiling. “I’m glad you’re here. Don’t ever leave.”

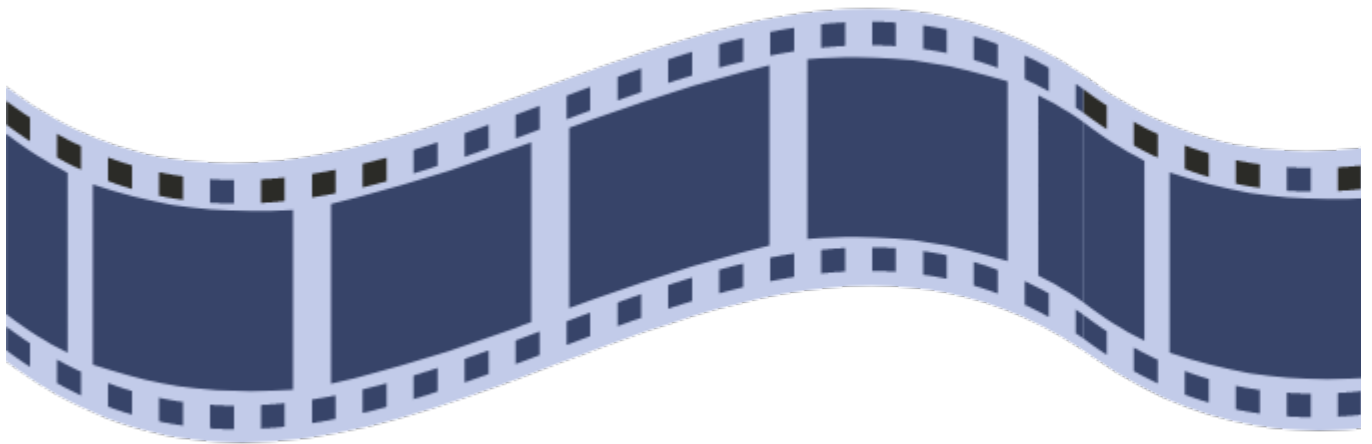
He can hear George’s smirk in his voice. “Florida, or your bed?”

“Either. Both.” He turns onto his side to look at George again, and his breath catches at the way the moonlight falls across the angles of his face. “You should just... go wherever I am.”

“Okay,” George agrees softly, eyes shining. “I will.”

They talk for almost an hour, getting sleepier and sleepier, until George eventually falls asleep. Dream’s in the middle of a sentence when he realizes that he’s completely passed out, breaths slow and even. He wants to be annoyed, but George is so adorable like this, all relaxed and peaceful, it’s impossible to hold anything against him. *Pretty privilege*, Dream thinks.

He drifts off with a smile on his face, soaking in the warmth of his favorite person in the entire world.



When Dream wakes up, there’s warm sunlight filtering in through his curtains, which he was a little too distracted to close last night. It falls over George’s soft features, illuminating his cheeks, his jaw, his forehead, the gentle curve of his lips.

For a few quiet moments, Dream just lays there, looking at him. There’s this funny feeling in his chest; a strange unfurling of warmth that expands with each passing second, stealing all the breath out of his lungs.

You are the most beautiful thing I’ve ever seen, he thinks.

I’ve never felt anything like this, he thinks.

I’m in love with you, he thinks. *Oh. I’m in love with you.*

It isn’t a shocking revelation. It should be—after all, it’s not every day that he realizes he’s hopelessly enamored with his best friend of years and years—but somehow, it feels as if he’s known all along. Somehow, it feels as if every step he’s taken in his entire life has led to this moment, to this sunny morning in bed with the most beautiful boy in the world.

“I love you,” he whispers out loud, trying it out. It feels normal. It feels... right.

George doesn’t stir, just keeps on breathing in and breathing out like nothing has changed. And in a way, it’s true: nothing *has* changed. Dream has loved him all along. He shifts a little in his sleep,

and Dream loves him. He starts to stir in the blinding daylight, and Dream loves him. He blinks his bleary eyes open, and Dream loves him.

“George,” he whispers.

George groans, eyelids fluttering. “So bright,” he grunts. “S blinding.”

You are, Dream wants to say. Because George is beautiful, and he’s here. He’s pretty and sleepy and warm and he’s *here*, in Dream’s house, in Dream’s bed. The honey-gold glow of the morning fills his eyes with warmth, turning them almost amber. Then his eyes fall on Dream, and his eyebrows furrow. “Who’re you? What are you doing in my bed?” His voice is deep and scratchy with sleep, and he sounds like a fucking angel.

Dream grins. He’s known George for long enough to know that he always wakes up confused, and it usually takes him a solid minute to get his bearings. Best of all, he doesn’t even *recognize* Dream. Oh, Dream is going to have some *fun* with this. He tilts his head, feigning confusion, and says in a terrible French accent, “George? ‘Ave yoo forgotten ‘oo I am?”

George sits up groggily. “Wha— This isn’t even my bed. Where—”

“*Mais oui, monsieur*. I am your loveurr, Jean-Claude, and yoo are *dans mon...* uh, bed.”

“You what?” George rubs his eyes in disbelief. The fog is beginning to clear from his gaze slightly, but he still looks utterly perplexed.

“We ‘ave ‘ad a *verrry* goood night, yoo and I,” Dream adds, trying not to giggle. “Now geeve your *amour* Jean-Claude un kiss-kiss.” He puckers his lips.

Recognition sparks in George’s eyes, and he groans out loud, his expression souring. “*Dream*. What the hell is wrong with you?”

Dream dissolves into giggles. “Oh *man*,” he wheezes. “I got you so *good*.” His voice pitches higher as he tries to speak through the laughter, but he can barely breathe. His head is spinning with pure, unadulterated joy, and he thinks dizzily that if waking up with George is always like this, he’ll happily do it every day for the rest of his life. George is so damn pretty—even when he’s annoyed and swatting at Dream the way he is now. Pranking George is just so much better than pranking anybody else. “I just— *ha*— I fucking *owned* you!”

It should feel strange to joke like this—to talk about kissing George and being his *amour*—when it’s everything he wants, but it doesn’t. There’s always been an element of truth to these jokes, whether he knew it or not.

“Ugh, you’re so annoying,” George grumbles. “It’s too early for this shit.”

“You’re the one who forgot my face less than twenty-four hours after I revealed it to you. And besides, it’s eleven AM.”

George lays back down, rolling over to face away from Dream. “Well, I’m jetlagged. Maybe it’s six AM in my brain.”

Dream laughs even harder. “*George*. The UK is the other way, idiot. It’s four o’clock in the afternoon there.”

George giggles. “Right. So it’s nearly breakfast time.”

“Breakfast,” Dream repeats, sitting up with a yawn. “Good idea.”

“Hey.” George yanks him back down by his arm. “What are you doing? I didn’t tell you to *move*.”

“It’s time to go eat breakfast. Come on, I’m cooking.” Dream jumps out of bed, energized by the idea of cooking for his best friend for the first time ever. He turns back to see if George is following his example.

He is not.

He pulls the covers over his head, and when he speaks, his voice comes out slightly muffled. “I don’t see what part of that involves me getting out of bed.”

Dream is speechless for a good ten seconds. When he finally finds his voice, the only thing he can say is, “*George*.”

George peeks one eye out from under the comforter. “Are you still here? I thought you were meant to be making me breakfast.”

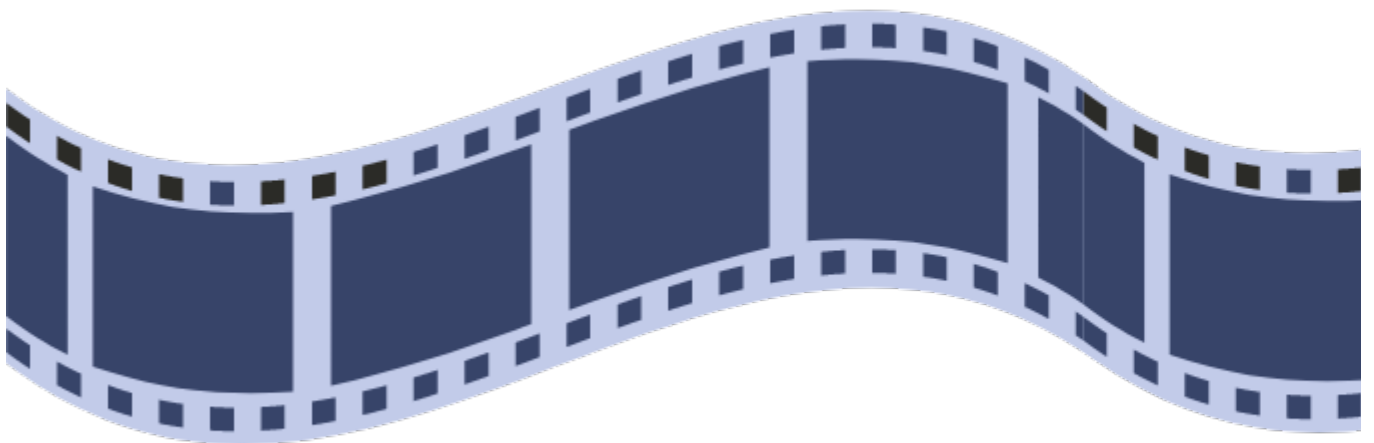
Dream has had enough. Exasperated, he yanks back the covers and wraps his fingers around one of George’s wrists. He starts to pull him out of bed, but the whine George lets out is enough to stop him in his tracks. His mind plummets into the gutter. *Oh, God*.

“No, *stop*,” George complains, oblivious. “It’s cold, I don’t wanna.”

And— *oh*. George is still only wearing his flannel pants, chest and stomach exposed to the morning chill. *Naked*, Dream’s brain says. He tells it to shut up. But George is so— so—

Shit. Dream really needs to get a new brain. His current one is too obsessed with George.

Maybe he just needs to get out of this room. Yeah. He’s gonna do that. He also needs to stop staring and find his voice to reply to George. What did he say? Something about being cold? “Put a hoodie on, then,” Dream finally comes up with. He turns around and grabs a bundle of fabric off the back of his desk chair, throwing it at George’s chest. Then, he flees.



When he gets to the kitchen, Patches is already perched beside her food bowl expectantly. He bites

back a laugh. Trust her to know when she's going to be fed. He grabs a can from the pantry and opens it, scooping the food into a clean bowl for her.

"Here you go, honey," he murmurs, stroking Patches gently as she starts to eat. "Eat your breakfast."

"Where's *my* breakfast, *honey*?" George complains from behind him, making him jump.

"Jeez, George. You scared m—"

Oh. Oh, *no*.

George is wearing his hoodie. George is *wearing* his *hoodie*.

And it's his own damn fault, isn't it? He vaguely remembers seeing George's bare torso, losing all mental faculties, and throwing an article of clothing at him. But the problem is, that harmless 'article of clothing' is Dream's favorite hoodie, his black Corpse one.

He's seen George in a Corpse hoodie before, of course. But George's Corpse hoodie doesn't fall down past his waist like this. It doesn't hide his hands until only his fingers poke out. In his own hoodies, he doesn't look this small and disheveled and sleepy and *cute*.

Shit. How is he supposed to look at George, *talk* to George, when he's dressed like that? Like... like....

Like he's mine.

"George," Dream finally chokes out. (It's the only word he can remember.)

George gives him a funny look. "You look like you've seen a ghost. Did I really scare you that much?"

"You did," Dream lies. It's not particularly convincing, but George doesn't press him for more details. "You're a terrifying man."

"I'm sure I am," George says, sliding onto one of the island stools. "So, what are you making me for breakfast?"

"Wha- you're not gonna help?"

"I help just by being here. I'm moral support."

"More like... *idiot* support," Dream argues, opening the fridge to pull out ingredients. There are plenty of things he wants to do now that George is finally in Florida, but one thing that he's been thinking about for years is being able to cook all of George's favorite foods for him—being able to spoil him. He's spent the last few weeks, much to Sapnap's amusement, compiling lists of dishes George likes, buying ingredients, and practicing his cooking. He just... wants everything to be perfect.

"If I'm an idiot," George says, "then why are you making me food right now, huh?"

"Fine, then. See if you get any breakfast tomorrow."

George gasps, and when Dream glances over at him, his mouth is hanging open in shock and outrage. Dream can't help but laugh. He's seen that expression hundreds of times over George's webcam, but this is so, so different. It's so much better in 3D.

“Close your mouth, Georgie, we are not a codfish,” he gets out through his laughter.

“*What?!*”

He can’t form any other words, can’t even speak, so he just keeps on laughing while George stares at him in abject horror. He’s wheezing so hard he can’t breathe, and a single tear rolls down his cheek. When he finally catches his breath, George is still glaring at him.

“Haven’t you seen *Mary Poppins*?” He asks. “You’re literally British.”

“Not all British people have seen *Mary Poppins*.”

“Okay, well, knowing that movie is a requirement for living in this house,” he decides. He turns around to grab a glass out of the cabinet. “We’re watching it. Together.”

“I... I want to do that,” George says. “Watch movies, I mean. Together.”

“We can do that.” Dream pours him some apple juice. *Your favorite*, he thinks. He doesn’t say it out loud. “Anything else you want to do?”

George takes the glass. He doesn’t thank Dream, and Dream has to turn away a little to hide his smile, strangely endeared by the fact. “Well, you know the meetup vlog,” he starts. “I want it to include me packing up my flat, flying over, and then a few days here.”

“Uh-huh.” Dream turns his focus back to breakfast, grabbing a container of mushrooms out of the fridge and chopping them up. “Let’s not stream for the next few days. Just so we can put our time towards the vlog, and then we can get that and the face-reveal out to the fans as soon as possible.”

“Right, yeah. What will we do all day, though?”

“I dunno.” Dream shrugs, looking up from his chopping board. “I guess we’ll find stuff to do. You can be in charge of looking.”

“Gee, thanks,” George scoffs.

Dream laughs a little, and they both fall silent as George pulls out his phone.

Dream turns all his attention back to cooking. He’s always loved to cook. It’s something he can devote every single part of his brain to, and leave behind worries about editing, or haters, or his plans for future lore. There’s no room for those kinds of things when he’s moving through the kitchen like a hurricane, slicing bacon, frying eggs and hash browns, heating up a can of baked beans on the stove, sautéing mushrooms, broiling sausages, and warming the plates, all at the same time.

Still, it’s a little different when, ten feet away from him, *George* is sitting on a stool, casually scrolling through Twitter as if this is an everyday occurrence. As if he’s been there for years. It’s enough to make Dream’s head spin. Is this really happening? He’s half-convinced that this is just a dream, and he’ll wake up any second now.

By the time Dream is taking three slices of toast out of the toaster, George has put down his phone and is just watching, hands folded in his lap as his eyes follow Dream around the kitchen. Dream fills a warm plate with toast, sausages, bacon, hash browns, beans, mushrooms, and eggs, and places it down on the island in front of George.

George’s jaw drops. “What– Is this an FEB?”

Dream brings a hand up to scratch at the back of his neck. “I mean, to be fair, it’s not, like, a *full* Full English Breakfast. There’s no tomatoes.”

“Well, good, because I don’t like tomatoes.”

“I know. That’s why there aren’t any,” Dream explains. “Duh.”

George begins to respond, but then Sappnap appears in the doorway. “That shit smells so good. You better have made enough for me.”

“Hey, dude,” Dream says. He serves the same thing onto a second plate and carries it over to Sappnap’s spot at the counter. “This is what British people have for breakfast.”

“Sup, dewd,” George mocks, crossing his arms like a 90s skater boy. “Oh, not much, bro. Let’s watch some *baa*-sketball.”

Dream puts his own breakfast on the last plate and claims the stool between George and Sappnap.

They eat in comfortable silence, and Dream is reminded once again of how lucky he is to be here. He’s warm, and fed, and surrounded by his two best friends in the entire world. What could be better than this?

Suddenly, Sappnap breaks him out of his thoughts. “Dream, what is this?” He waves a piece of bacon in the air on his fork. “Like, it isn’t really bacon, but it’s not ham either. But it’s more bacon-y than Canadian bacon.”

“Oh! It’s, uh, British bacon. Well, okay, not exactly. It’s not from a British pig or anything, it’s just a different cut of meat than American bacon is. It’s, like, higher quality, I guess. I didn’t know if I’d be able to find it here, but they actually have it at Whole Foods.”

George blinks. “I didn’t know that.”

“Neither did I,” Sappnap says.

Dream grins. “That’s why I’m the cook in this house. I’m literally both of your moms right now. I make you guys home-cooked meals and everything.”

A surprised laugh bursts out of George. “Don’t *say* that, Dream, oh my God. I don’t want to be Sappnap’s brother. He smells.” He makes a face, and Dream chuckles.

“Fine, then,” Sappnap huffs in mock-anger, standing up to leave his empty plate beside the sink. “I’m gonna go call Karl. At least he loves me, unlike George over here.”

George sticks his tongue out.

Sappnap continues, “Thank you so much for breakfast, Clay, I love you so much. You’re amazing. Marry me, right now.”

“Your wish is my command,” Dream says, jumping out of his seat to grab the twist-tie off of the loaf of bread and bend it into a circle. He slides it onto Sappnap’s ring finger. “Do you, Sappitus Nappitus, take me, Dream, to be your lawfully wedded—”

“Wife!” George yells.

Dream and Sappnap both turn to gape at him. “You are *ruining* my wedding ceremony, George,” Dream hisses.

“Well, you never asked if there were any objections. And I object.”

Dream gasps. “You love me? You want to marry me instead?”

George looks right past him. “Sapnap, from the moment I set eyes on you, I knew you were the one for me—”

“*Out.*” Dream orders. George slides off his stool and starts to turn around, and he grabs his sleeve to keep him there. “Not you. Sapnap, get out of my kitchen. You’re stealing my George, and I won’t tolerate it anymore. So leave.”

“Or what?” Sapnap challenges.

“Or I’ll kiss you on the mouth.”

Sapnap turns around and sprints out of the kitchen, faster than Dream has ever seen him run before.

“Is it too late to get a ticket back to London?” George asks, grabbing his glass of juice. “Suddenly, I’m rethinking all of my life decisions. I can’t live in a place like this.”

“Sorry, you can’t.” Dream shakes his head solemnly. “You’re stuck here now. If you try to leave, we’ll lock you in your bedroom. Tie you to the bed.”

George chokes on his apple juice. “Tie me to the bed?”

Um. Dream did not mean to say that. He wasn’t even thinking it. “Wait— No— I didn’t—”

But George is already laughing, putting his glass down on the counter so he can clutch at Dream’s shoulder for support. “You’re so weird. That was such a weird thing to say.” He leans his forehead on Dream’s shoulder as his laughter slows, and Dream lets his hands fall loosely around George’s waist. He rests his chin on the top of George’s fluffy hair.

“What is this?” George asks after a few seconds. “This is the weirdest, most half-hearted hug ever.”

Dream grins. “If you want a *real* hug, you can just ask.”

“Come here, idiot.” George throws his arms around Dream’s waist, pulling him in with surprising strength.

Dream clings on with all his might. “Good morning, George,” he whispers into his hair. “Welcome to Orlando.”

Standing in the kitchen, hugging George, Dream is struck by the sudden and unexpected urge to cry.

This is everything he wanted, everything he imagined might happen when George moved in. Lazy breakfasts, kitchen banter, casual embraces.... If things like this keep happening, he’s going to confess his love before the end of the day.

That—to be clear—is a colossally, catastrophically bad idea. Confessing your unrequited crush to your business partner? Bad idea. Confessing your unrequited crush to your roommate? Worse idea. Confessing your unrequited crush to your best friend? The *worst*. But George is *all three* of those things. So Dream’s feelings will stay in his head where they belong.

He’s probably going to need to ask Sapnap for help, isn’t he?

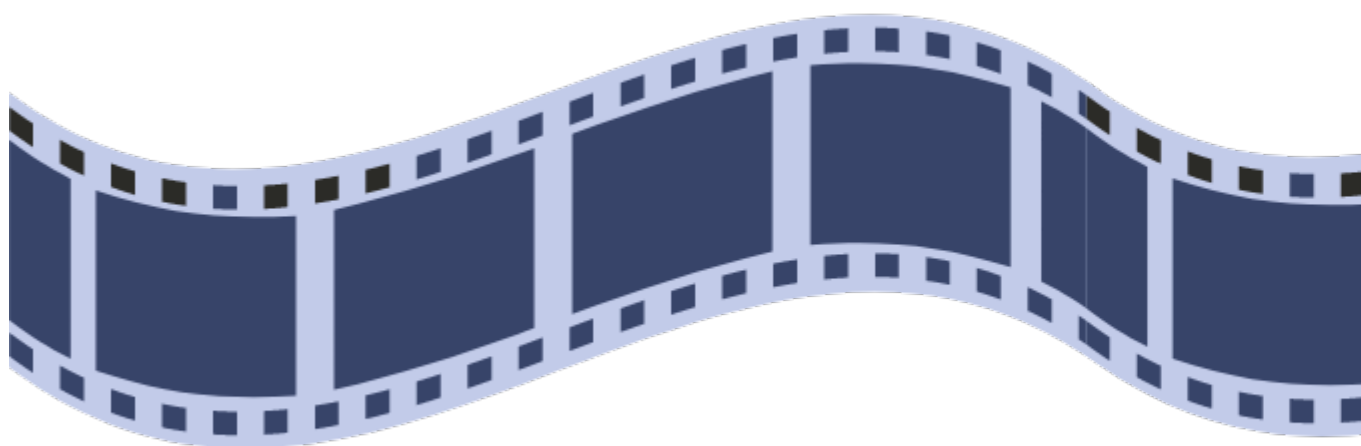
“I should turn the camera off,” George says, pulling him away from his thoughts. “This is definitely wasting the memory.”

“You— *what?* You’ve been recording this?” Dream steps back, breaking contact immediately.

“Yeah, since I got up,” George says, like it’s obvious. “I literally told you. Remember? Right after I scared you? Come on, you know the fans are expecting a meetup vlog.”

“Right.” Dream fakes a laugh. “Whoops. Guess I forgot.”

He is definitely going to need to ask Sapnap for help.



“Sapnap,” he says. “I need your help with... acting.”

“Acting? What, singing wasn’t working out for you?”

“No, dude, like—” he flails for a good excuse. “I’m face-revealing soon, and I don’t want to be live on camera in front of the entire internet if I have no poker-face, you know? What if they ask me something secret and then I leak it because I can’t hide anything?”

“Oh. Yeah, I get it.” Sapnap sits up on the couch, pulling his legs up to sit criss-cross. “I usually... if I’m trying to hide something, I’ll just say, like, ‘what would I do if this was true?’ and then I do the opposite.”

“What?”

“I don’t know. Just... like, if I’m sad, I’ll think, ‘Oh, if I was sad right now I’d be all quiet and mokey.’ And then I make sure to talk and laugh a bunch so I don’t look sad. Works pretty well for me, usually.”

Dream blinks. “Uh... okay.”

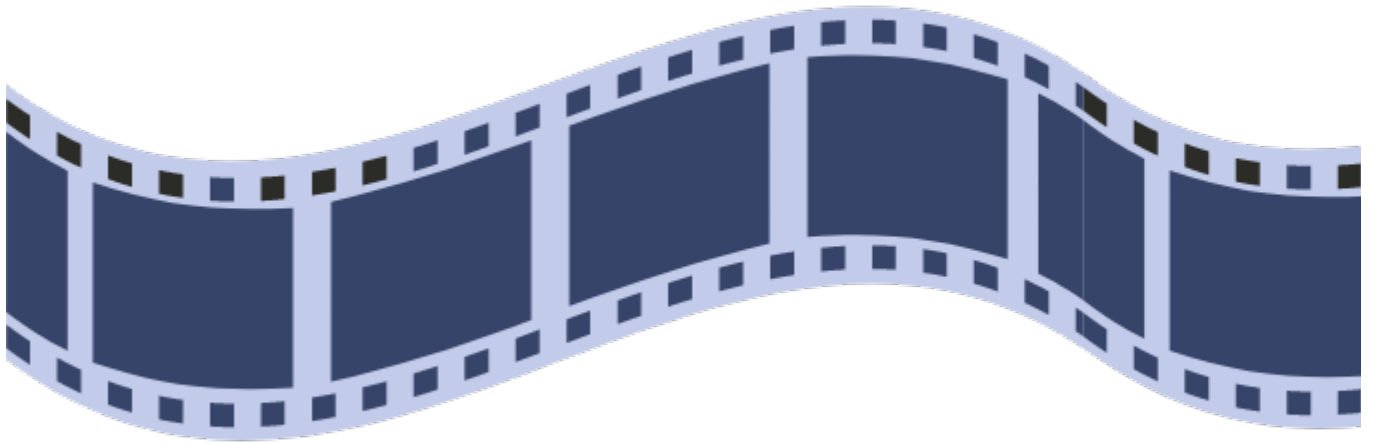
Sapnap scoffs. “Don’t look at me like that. It makes sense! Here— How do you feel right now?”

“Confused. And, like, nervous, I guess. About the face reveal stuff.” *About George*, his brain corrects. *Shut up*, he replies.

“Okay, so how would you act if you were nervous and confused? You’d probably slouch a little, and frown, and do that fiddling-with-your-hands thing. So stop. Put your hands down. Sit up straight.”

Dream takes a deep breath, then follows Sapnap’s instructions.

Sapnap brightens immediately. “There you go, dude! Go get ‘em.” He claps Dream on the shoulder. “Whenever you want to face reveal, I’m here, man.”



Dream is working on the code for a future plugin later that day when George bursts into his room. “Let’s go bowling,” he says.

Dream doesn’t look up. “No.”

“Why not?” There’s something in George’s voice—something extra cheery, the way there is when he’s on stream. Dream glances over and— oh. He’s filming.

“Well, for starters, I haven’t face-revealed,” Dream argues.

“Rent out the whole alley, then.”

He scoffs. “That’s a waste. Besides, there are still the staff. What if one of them took a picture of me?”

George pans the camera to his own face, stage-whispering, “Somebody’s paranoid.”

Dream crosses his arms, fighting back a smile. “Think of something else to do.”

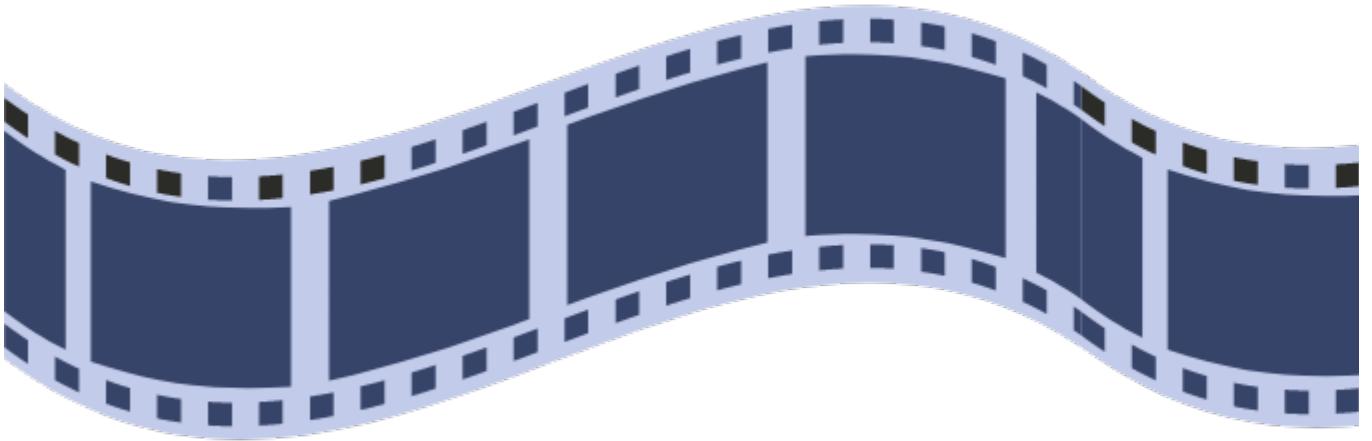
“We could go to the park!”

“Something in *private*.”

“Private, huh?” George smirks. “Didn’t know you felt this way about me, Dream.”

Oh, *wow*. Smirking isn’t supposed to be that attractive, is it? *You’re on camera, you’re on camera, you’re on camera*, he reminds himself. He grasps for words, any words, and comes up with,

“Okay, fine. Let’s go for a swim.”



It turns out to be the worst idea he’s ever had.

First, because he has to deal with half-naked George again. *I’m normal*, he tells himself. *I feel so completely normal about this*. But normal people are supposed to have control over their eyes, and Dream can’t stop his from following George everywhere he goes. Over and over again, they get stuck on the curve of his shoulders, the ridges of his spine, the smooth angles of his collarbones.

Second, he’s being filmed the entire time. George and Sapnap are talking to him, and they’re looking at him, and the camera’s on him, and he can’t fucking focus. He’s never been that ADHD stereotype, the one that goes *Oh, look! A butterfly*, and wanders off mid-sentence, but he can barely string two words together without catching sight of George’s bare skin and forgetting his own name.

He dimly realizes George is talking to him. “Huh?”

“Dream, I’ve asked you the same question four times.”

He closes his eyes, trying to push the images out of his mind. “Okay, I’m listening now. I’m ready.”

“No. You’ve lost your chance.”

“No, please! I want to know.” Dream is dimly aware that he sounds like a whining infant.

George sighs. “Okay. Can you– Do you want to help me put on sunscreen?”

“Sunscreen?” Dream is assaulted with an alarmingly vivid visual: him, standing behind George. His hands on George’s back, on his warm, smooth skin, touching him; rubbing slowly all over–

“Yeah. Here.” George hands him a bottle.

“Oh.” He stops in his tracks. “It’s... a spray sunscreen. Right.”

“Were you expecting something different?”

“No!” Dream blurts out. “No, I just... well, okay. I just forgot what kind of sunscreen we had because it’s been so long since we went outside.”

“Right.” George laughs. “No, I think you’re just disappointed. You *wish* it was a cream so you could put your hands all over me.”

Dream panics for the briefest of moments before he registers it’s a joke. “Oh. Um, you got me! Ha, ha,” he says convincingly. He wonders what George would say if he knew how true it really was. He wonders if George would have said the same thing if they weren’t on camera.

George turns around, lifting his arms out to the sides.

Dream laughs at him. “George, you’re T-posing.” He sprays the first bit of sunscreen into the grass.

George grins back at him over his shoulder. “I’m T-posing! I’m T-posing on *you*. Get muffined.” He drops his arms and turns around. “Why did you just spray that on the ground? You’re wasting it.”

“I’m getting rid of the gross, crusty part. It’s always crusty at the top.”

From behind him, Sapnap scoffs. “That’s BS. ‘It’s always crusty at the top’?”

“Oh, it is.” George seems to have abandoned his skepticism. “Just like you, Sapnap. That’s why you wear a hat: to hide your crusty, dusty hair.”

“Your mother *loves* this hair—”

“Guys!” Dream cuts in. “Knock it off. George, turn back around.”

“Fine.” George complies.

Dream takes a deep breath. *What would I do if I was freaking out right now? Probably stare, and stutter, and lose track of my thoughts. So what’s the opposite of that?* He should... speak confidently, not look at anything in particular for too long.

“Okay,” he announces. “I’m spraying you.”

George snickers. “Just do it, idiot.”

So Dream does. He tries to stand far enough back that he can’t see the tiny details of George’s skin. He doesn’t want to memorize every inch of him. He doesn’t want every freckle, every birthmark burned into his mind. Because that would be totally weird. He sprays the expanse of George’s back, trying not to focus on the way George’s skin glistens under the spray. He makes sure to get the line of his shoulders, the back of his neck. He doesn’t want George to get burnt. He doesn’t want George to be in pain.

Somehow, he resists the urge to rub it all in, to run his hands down George’s back. Just in the interest of making sure he didn’t miss a spot, of course. Not for any other reason.

“I’m done,” he says. *Don’t look at anything for too long.* George turns around, and he looks away.

“Will you do me?” Dream asks, eyes fixed on the house over George’s shoulder.

George laughs. “Yeah, I’ll do you. *And* I’ll put sunscreen on you as well.”

“Jesus Christ,” Sapnap mutters. They both ignore him.

“Are you still filming?” Dream asks as George snatches the spray bottle and stands behind him. He winces at the cold sunscreen as it hits his back.

Sapnap nods. “Yeah, I put the camera over there.” He points to where it’s propped up on a chair.

“Done!” George puts the spray bottle down.

“I’m doing my own sunscreen,” Sapnap says. “I’m not gonna participate in your weird mating ritual.”

“Whatever, idiot,” George retorts. “Me and Dream will take over the vlog.” He walks toward the camera, stopping just in front of it. “Guys, guess what? Today, we’re going to the pool!”

“Why did you say ‘we’re going to the pool’?” Dream scoffs. “We’re *at* the pool. It’s in our backyard.”

“Okay, fine. We’re going *in* the pool. Happy now?” George doesn’t wait for an answer. “And I’m going to beat Dream and Sapnap in a race.”

“You literally couldn’t,” Sapnap argues. “You’re so scrawny.”

“Wanna bet?” George laughs the way he does when he has an idea. “Okay. Race you guys into the pool. Ready, go!” And he does a running jump into the pool, launching himself into the air and coming down in a perfect cannonball.

When he surfaces a moment later, he’s completely soaked, throwing his head back with carefree laughter.

“You look like a drowned rat,” Sapnap says. Dream thinks that’s the stupidest thing he’s ever heard.

You look like a model, Dream wants to say. Instead, he averts his eyes and weakly protests, “George, you’re supposed to wait a few minutes for the sunscreen to sink in.”

“You can still take second place, Dream,” George says, ignoring him. “You can still beat Sapnap.” He’s Performer George now, playing everything up for the cameras, but Dream doesn’t mind. He loves him like this, too.

“Fuck off, George,” Sapnap says, slamming down the sunscreen. He makes a run for the pool.

Dream won’t get last place. He can’t get last place. He runs too, shoving Sapnap out of the way and jumping, almost straight on top of George.

When he comes up, spluttering and coughing, George is right with him, spitting pool water in his face. “Dream,” he complains. “You splashed me.”

Dream laughs. “Sorry.” He keeps avoiding eye contact with George, not wanting to see how he looks all soaked and slicked back with pool water. *Act normal*, he tells himself. *Don’t look at anything in particular for too long.*

From where he stopped when Dream pushed him, Sapnap announces, “I’m just gonna grab a few GoPros. We have a bunch, and they worked pretty well for the waterpark vlog you did with Tommy, right George?”

“Yeah. Good plan,” George says. “I don’t really want to waste all the space on my video camera.”

Sapnap shuts the camera off and brings it inside with him, and then Dream and George are alone.

George takes a step closer. “Looks like it’s just us.”

“Just us,” Dream repeats, but he takes a step back. “Alone. Together.” *No cameras*, he thinks.

George laughs, takes another step forward. Dream takes another step back, eyes on the door to the house.

“Why do you keep doing that?” George says. He takes another step forward.

“Doing what?” Dream’s back hits the wall.

“You’re, like, avoiding my eyes.”

“It’s just bright out here.”

“Dream.”

“George,” Dream says weakly.

“Look at me. Please.”

Dream complies, and his breath gets caught in his throat. George’s eyelashes are darker than usual, thick and sparkling with droplets of water. His eyes are so much more intense in person, worming their way into Dream’s soul like they know all of his secrets.

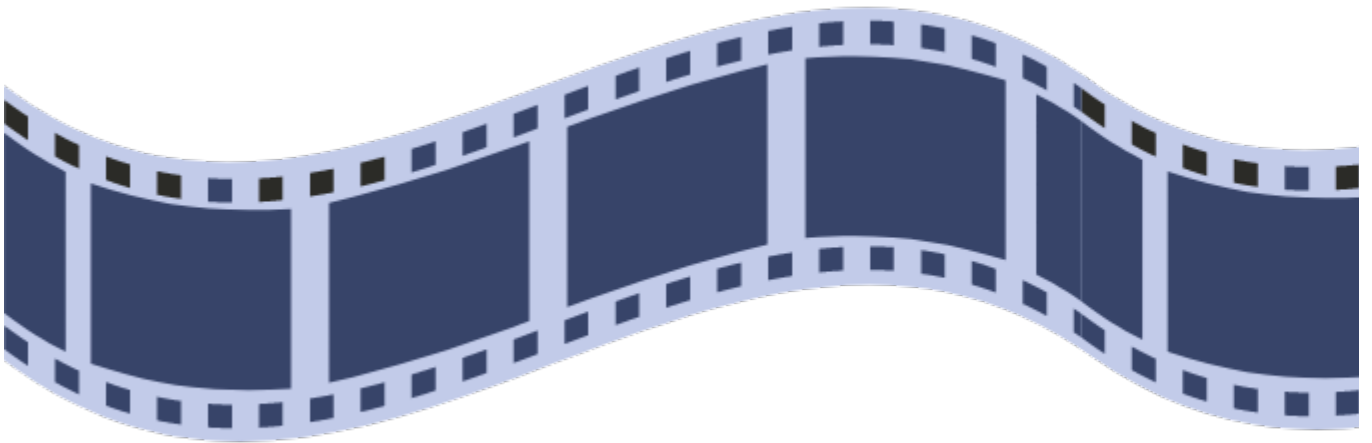
“Hi,” George whispers, and Dream’s eyes flick down to his mouth. His lips are pink and plush and already wet, and his tongue darts out to wet them more. Dream is consumed by the need to kiss. To take, and to *claim*, and to surge forward and ruin the best friendship he’s ever had. *I love you*, he thinks.

He wants to kiss George. He *needs* to kiss George. He leans in just the tiniest bit—

“I’m back!”

George and Dream jump apart as the door bangs shut behind Sapnap.

Oh fuck. Five minutes alone, and Dream was ready to spill everything to George. This is going to be a problem.



Their time in the pool goes... fine. Well, as fine as it can be with Dream's traitorous eyes running all over George every time they get the chance. He tries to act normal, to follow Sapnap's advice, but it's obvious even to him that he's acting strangely.

Still, they manage to have some fun. George and Sapnap are both strangely obsessed with splashing Dream in the face and dunking him underwater. They film on and off for almost two hours. It'll be a bitch to edit later, but right now, Dream is having the time of his life. His stomach aches from laughing, and his lungs ache from being dunked underwater so much.

"Guys, this sucks," he groans. "Why are you beating me up?"

"Because we're better than you!" George crows. "You suck."

"Yeah. Get dunked on," Sapnap contributes helpfully.

"Fuck off, guys. Okay, how about this. Let's PVP later. Just you guys versus me, on good old-fashioned Minecraft. In-person. We can even do it on the Xbox."

"No," George says.

"That doesn't sound very fair," Sapnap agrees.

"It is fair," Dream insists. "You fight me in the pool, I fight you in-game. And then we find out who's *really* tougher."

"You know what, Dream?" Sapnap asks, and then there are rough hands on his shoulders as they both dunk him together.

When they finally get out and the cameras are off, Dream trains his eyes firmly on the ground for about two seconds before he goes right back to staring at George, watching a little droplet trace its way down his back.

"I call first shower!" George says, and he scurries inside, wet feet leaving footprints on the tile.

Sapnap frowns. "Doesn't he know that we have four bathrooms?"

Dream laughs. “No, he’s— in the house he grew up in, you can only use one shower at a time, or the hot water doesn’t work.”

“Really?”

“Yeah.” Dream smiles, fondness warming him from the inside out. “I wonder if he’s gonna realize that our house doesn’t work like that and feel stupid.”

“Definitely,” Sapnap says. “How did you even know that?”

Dream shrugs. “I dunno. He must have just told me on one of our calls. I think it’s kind of a normal thing in the UK. Old houses and stuff.”

“Sometimes I think you guys know too much about each other.” Sapnap sighs. “And somehow, you still know nothing.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Dream scoffs.

Sapnap doesn’t answer. “I think I see what you meant earlier about that poker face,” he says instead.

Dream opens his mouth; closes it. Then he opens it again. “Um. Well.”

“Can we really even use that vlog footage?” Sapnap asks. “All you did for the first twenty minutes was blush and stare at George.”

“He was half-naked!” Dream retorts. “No— Wait— That sounds— I didn’t—”

“*Dream.* Shut up.”

Dream shuts up.

“If you like George, you can tell me.”

“Yeah,” Dream says quietly.

Sapnap blinks. “Yeah?”

“Yeah. I... I do.”

“Oh.” Sapnap looks at the ground for a minute, brow furrowed in confusion. “I wasn’t expecting you to admit it just like that.”

Dream starts laughing. “Well, then why did you ask, idiot?”

“I don’t know!” Now Sapnap is laughing, too. “I really— You really surprised me there.”

“You were, like—” Dream wheezes. “You were speechless!”

“Yeah, heh.” Sapnap huffs out a final laugh, and it sounds like a sigh of relief. “I’m really happy for you, man. That’s great.”

Dream scoffs. “This is, like, the worst thing that could ever happen to our friendship. How is it *great*?”

“Well, it’s great that you finally admitted it. To yourself and to me.”

Dream gives him a shaky smile. “God, I’m like– I’m, like, nervous right now. My heart’s beating so fast.” He presses a palm to his chest.

“Well, you already told me,” Sapnap laughs. “Can’t take it back now!”

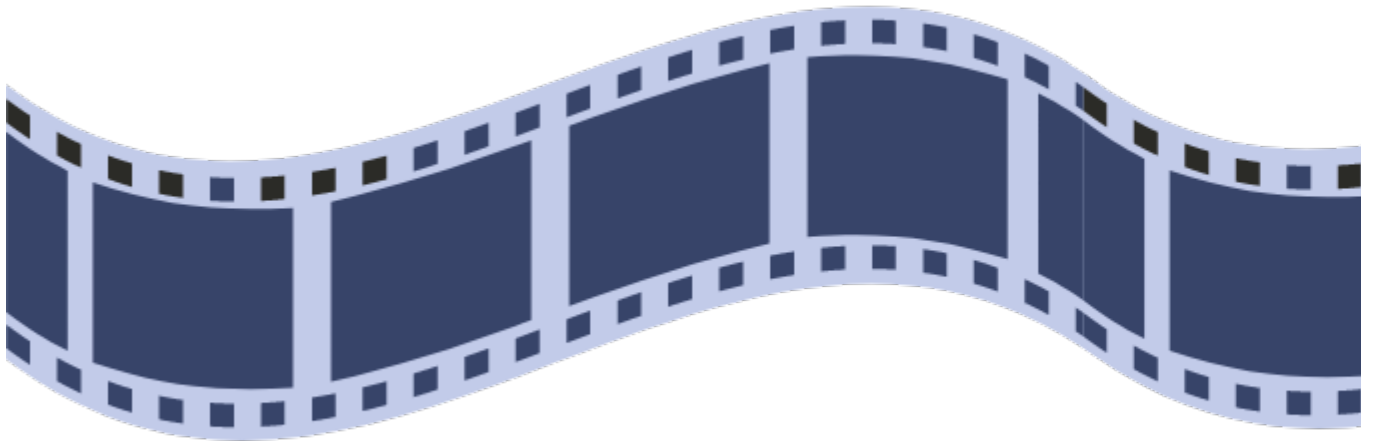
“Thanks for–” Dream swallows around the unexpected lump in his throat. “Thanks for listening. And being here for me, and stuff.”

“Yeah, man.” Sapnap pulls him in for a cold, chlorine-soaked hug. “You’re my brother.”

Dream holds on tight. “I love you.”

“Love you, too.” Sapnap lets go, patting his arm. “Now go get in the shower. If we hurry, we can both be done before George, and we can convince him that we both showered before him and he actually got the *last* shower. And he’ll think he, like, hallucinated.”

Dream laughs, loud and happy. “You’re such an idiot.”



Later, after a few hours spent sitting around on their computers, they watch a movie. It’s *Kiki’s Delivery Service*, a Ghibli film that Dream has seen too many times to count. If it was up to Dream, they’d be watching *Mary Poppins*, but Sapnap rudely rejected the suggestion when he brought it up.

That movie sucks ass, he said. I have a meeting tomorrow night. You guys can watch it without me.

And so, they end up in the living room, watching a little girl fly through cobbled streets on her broomstick, a boy on a bike following close behind.

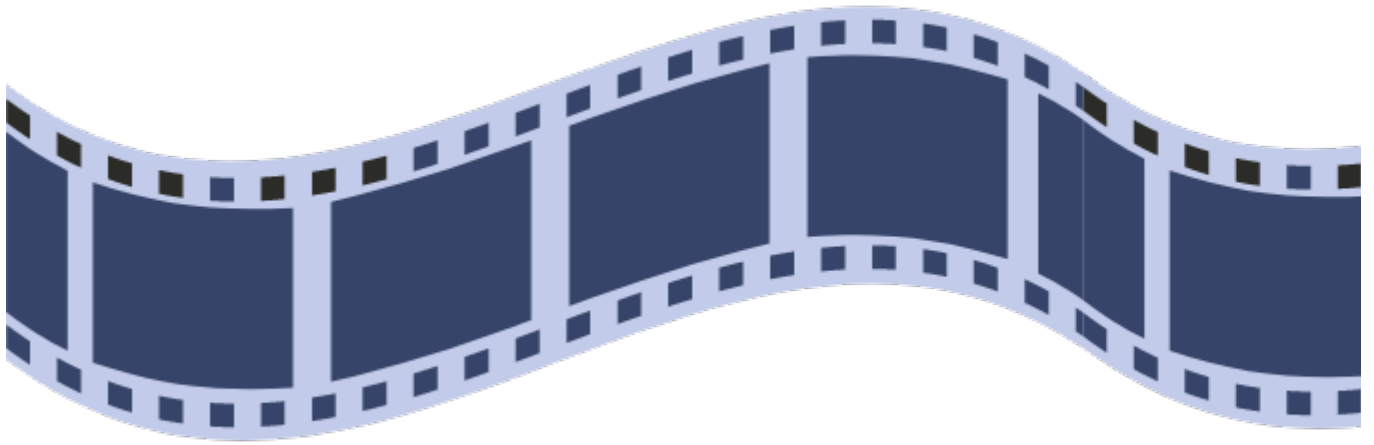
“Look, it’s Wilbur Soot!” George says, pointing at the TV. He’s sitting next to Dream, and Sapnap has his own couch a few feet away. It’s very, very difficult for Dream to focus on the movie and not the way George’s leg feels as it presses against his own.

“That guy’s name is Tombo,” Dream corrects. “He looks nothing like Wilbur.”

“Of course he does,” George scoffs. “He’s dressed like a little French boy. That’s totally something Wilbur would wear.”

Dream tilts his head, considering it. He looks at the boy's jeans; at his striped shirt. "I don't see it."

"Yeah, George is full of shit," Sapnap agrees. And they continue watching the movie in silence.



The problem starts a while later, when they're about halfway through the movie. Over time, as Dream and George have relaxed into the couch, they've relaxed into each other.

"Look, it's the dirigible!" George yelps, reaching over and grabbing Dream's arm in both of his hands. And he leans into Dream with such momentum that he falls completely onto him, bodies flush together.

"Jeez, be careful," Dream scolds, wrapping an arm around George's waist to steady him.

"Sorry," George mumbles. "I just love that thing." He slumps against Dream's chest for a moment, before rolling over so he's sitting back in Dream's lap.

And now— *shit*. Dream's arms are around George's waist. He can't move them now, can he? That would be weird. Totally, completely weird. Right? So now he just has to deal with this. With George, tucked between his arms, head tipped back on his chest as it rises and falls.

He wonders if George can hear his heart, the way it's pounding out of his chest. But if he can, he doesn't say anything, just sinks further into the embrace, turning his face a little bit into the fabric of Dream's t-shirt. Dream brings a shaking hand up to cradle the back of his head, to sink into his soft, messed-up hair.

George makes the tiniest noise, head pushing back into the contact, and Dream cautiously cards his fingers through his hair. When his heart finally settles back into a semi-steady rhythm, he starts to notice how nice George feels in his arms. He's a comforting warmth, a steady weight, and his hair tickles Dream's palms. It's fragile, this moment, and Dream isn't going to be the one to break it. But the seconds fade into minutes, and eventually Dream just relaxes, basking in the contact even as time melts into nothing around the two of them.

"Okay, I'm going to bed."

Dream jumps at the sudden noise, turning to look over at Sapnap, who's standing in front of his

couch now.

“But...” Dream glances over at the TV, where the credits are playing. *When did we finish the movie?*

“Good night,” George says, and then Sapnap is gone.

As Sapnap’s footsteps fade up the stairs, Dream and George stay exactly where they are. *See, I would get up*, Dream reasons to himself, *but George is on me, so I can’t move*. And so, he... stays. He sits, and he holds George, and he stays in the same spot, frozen in place, until the credits all finish and the main menu pops up.

After a few minutes of silence, George leans over to the side and turns his head slightly to look up towards Dream. “Hey.”

Dream angles his face down. “Hey,” he says back. His voice comes out hoarse and quiet. Somehow, he can’t muster any more conviction behind his words in such close proximity to George. They’re almost face-to-face like this, and Dream is a little bit captivated by the way the light of the TV plays off of George’s features.

He’s struck by the thought that he wants to learn what George looks like in every type of lighting. He wants to know everything about him. *I love you*, he thinks. He almost says it.

But George isn’t looking at his eyes. He’s looking somewhere lower, somewhere that makes Dream’s stomach dip in anticipation. He lets his own eyes dip to George’s lips, which look soft and inviting and—

Fuck. He’s doing it again. He’s letting himself get lost in the moments, in the fantasy of it all.

He turns away. “Alright,” he says. “Bedtime.”

He hears George swallow. “Yeah. Good idea.”

They trudge up the stairs together (Dream does *not* stare at George’s ass the whole way up), and for a single, heart-stopping second, Dream thinks that George might follow him into his room. But the second passes, and George goes to his own room. Dream tries not to let the disappointment choke him as it rises in his throat.

He goes to his room, and he puts on his pajamas, alone. He brushes his teeth, alone. He gets into bed, alone. He can still see the person-shaped indent where George was last night.

He’s out of bed and stumbling into the hallway before he even realizes what he’s doing. He bursts through George’s door before he can stop himself.

“Dream?” George is already in bed, with his lamp still emitting a soft light from the table next to his bed. He looks beautiful in this lighting, too.

“Hi,” Dream says.

“Hi,” George says. “Is everything okay? Did you need something?”

“Did I— um,” Dream says, and he realizes he didn’t think this far ahead. “Well, I just came to check on you. In your new room, and all. Do you— Can I get you anything?”

George shifts, slouching a little further down in his bed. “Well, this mattress is a little

uncomfortable.”

“Oh.” Dream starts brainstorming ways to fix this. “There’s a memory foam topper, do you not like that? Or maybe— Do you think it isn’t thick enough? Should we order you a bigger one, or—”

“Dream. Dream.” George holds a hand up to stop him. “I think it’s gonna be fine. It’s just... too new, right now. You know? It just needs to be slept in a few times. It needs to be broken in, or something.”

“Oh. Okay. Well...” Dream draws a blank. “Um. Should I just leave you to it, then?”

“No, idiot.” George stares at him for a few seconds.

He stares blankly back.

George huffs. “Do I really have to—” He cuts off, pulling back the covers on the other side of the bed. “Get in.”

Oh.

Dream’s surprise must show on his face, because George looks away. “Or don’t, it’s up to you. I don’t even know why I—”

“No, no!” Dream snaps out of his daze. He somehow manages to get his feet working again, and he stumbles over, falling into George’s bed. “I will. I... want to. I mean, you can’t really expect to break in this mattress all by yourself, can you?”

“Exactly,” George sounds relieved. “That would just be... way too much work. For one person.” He helps yank the covers out from under Dream, and he pulls them up to his chin as he gets settled.

“Did you just... tuck me in?”

“Well,” George seems to flounder for a moment. “You— It— You looked like you needed some help.”

“Oh. Well... thanks.”

“You’re welcome.”

They lay in silence for a full minute, both flat on their backs, staring up at the ceiling. It’s so strange when George does things like this off-camera: when he invites Dream into his bed, or tucks him in, or pulls him in closer and closer and closer. When they’re streaming, or recording, or vlogging, anything George says is obviously for the benefit of the viewers. But lately, it seems like George is pandering all the time, without any audience to pander to.

“Dream. Are you asleep?” George whispers.

“No?” Dream frowns. “It’s been, like, two minutes. The light is literally still on.”

“Oh. Me neither.”

Dream does not look over at George. He’s terrified to see him up-close, sleepy and glowing in the lamplight. Once he knows what that looks like, he’ll never be able to let it go. But he feels the dip of the bed and hears the rustle of the covers. A moment later, there’s a soft click and the room is plunged into darkness.

He closes his eyes and tries to steady his breathing. *In, out. In, out. In—*

“I can’t sleep.” George’s soft words cut through the silence.

Dream smiles despite himself. “You’re so impatient.”

“I just—” George sighs heavily, like he’s suffering a great hardship. “I thought it would be easy to sleep. If you were here, I mean.”

“Well,” Dream swallows, finally risking a glance over. In the darkness, he can just barely make out a silhouette, the vaguest suggestion of George’s nose a few inches away. “I’m not doing *everything* I could be. Like, if you want me to do more, I can.”

“More? Like what?”

“Like, I dunno,” he forces his voice to sound as nonchalant as possible. “Some people find it easier to sleep if someone is holding them.”

“And you’d—” George’s breath seems to catch for the briefest of moments. “You’d do that? You’d hold me?”

Dream reaches out. He’s not sure what he’s looking for, but his fingertips brush George’s wrist, and he’s winding their fingers together before he can stop himself. “I mean... yeah. I’m your best friend. I want you to sleep well.”

“Right.” George’s voice is unreadable. “Okay. Come here, then.”

Come here. The words hit Dream like a speeding train, knocking the wind out of him. He tries to find the words to reply, but they get stuck in his throat, so he just slides over in the bed, hooking an arm around George’s waist to pull him in close.

They end up pressed together, George’s back against Dream’s front, radiating a dizzying warmth that seems to seep into Dream’s bones, making him feel sleepy and sweet.

“How’s this?” He breathes. “Better?”

“Yeah.” George’s voice is quiet, thick with some unidentifiable emotion. “It’s... nice, isn’t it?”

“It’s like a hug,” Dream reasons. He sounds unsure even to his own ears, but the warmth pushes his uncertainty away. “We’re best friends. We should hug all the time.”

“At least twice a day,” George agrees with a yawn. “Like brushing your teeth.”

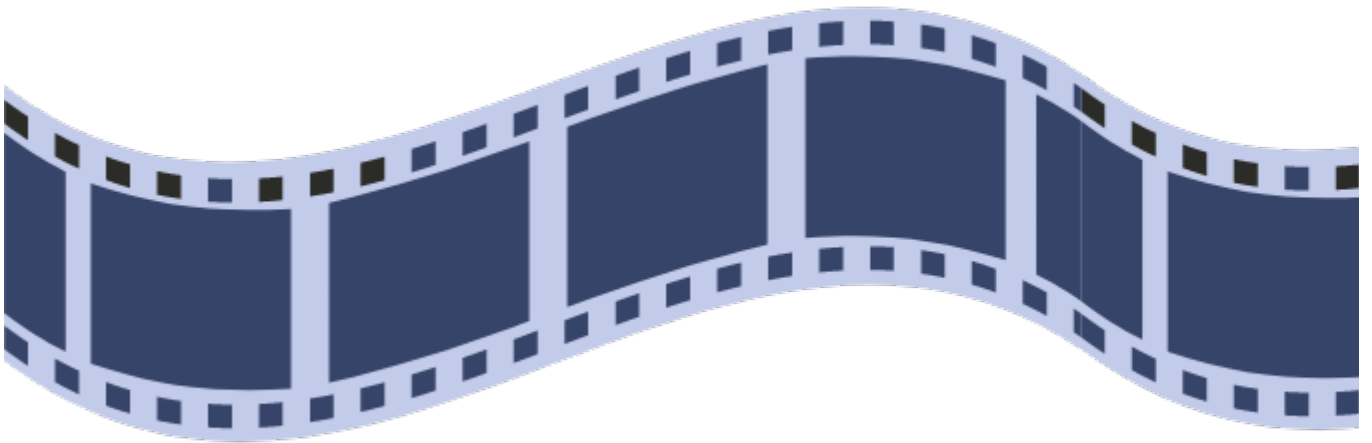
Dream smiles, and he can’t resist the urge to press a gentle kiss to the top of George’s head where it rests under his chin. “Okay. From now on, I promise to give you a good-morning hug every day, and to hug you to sleep every night.”

“Yeah?” George sounds pleased.

“Yeah. Now sleep, idiot.”

“Mm. Okay.” George sighs, and it sounds like relief. “Good night, Dream.”

“Good night, George.”



In the morning, Dream gives George the good-morning hug he promised, and he regrets every single one of his life choices at the feel of George's chest against his own. But when they pull apart, he smiles like everything is normal, and he makes George white toast with strawberry jam. George eats every last bite, and then he tells him American toast isn't as good as British toast.

Dream can't decide what he wants more: to kiss him or to smack him upside the head. In the end, he does nothing, and George wanders into the living room and turns on the next episode of *Better Call Saul*.

They sit on different couches to watch it, and every inch of Dream feels wrong when he's not touching George.

"It's too cold in here," George whines when they're about ten minutes in.

Dream stands up. "I'll get you a blanket."

George waves him off. "No, don't. Just lay on top of me."

He chokes on his own spit. "*Lay on you?*"

"Not– Not in a *weird* way, Dream. I just meant, like, you could be my blanket."

Dream laughs, and laughs, and laughs. "Your blanket?" He wheezes. "How could that *not* be in a weird way?" He wipes at his eyes. "Oh my god, I can't breathe."

"Fine. Don't, then," George says.

"No, I'm—" Dream takes a deep breath, trying to calm down. "I can be your blanket if you want."

"No. You've been uninvited, sorry." George crosses his arms. "Go sit on your own couch."

"George, come on. You know I didn't mean it—"

"Morning, guys," Sapnap says from the doorway. "Are you seriously bickering right now? It's, like, eight AM."

Dream frowns. “It’s almost noon.”

“Same difference.” Sapnap waves a dismissive hand in his direction. “What are our plans for today?”

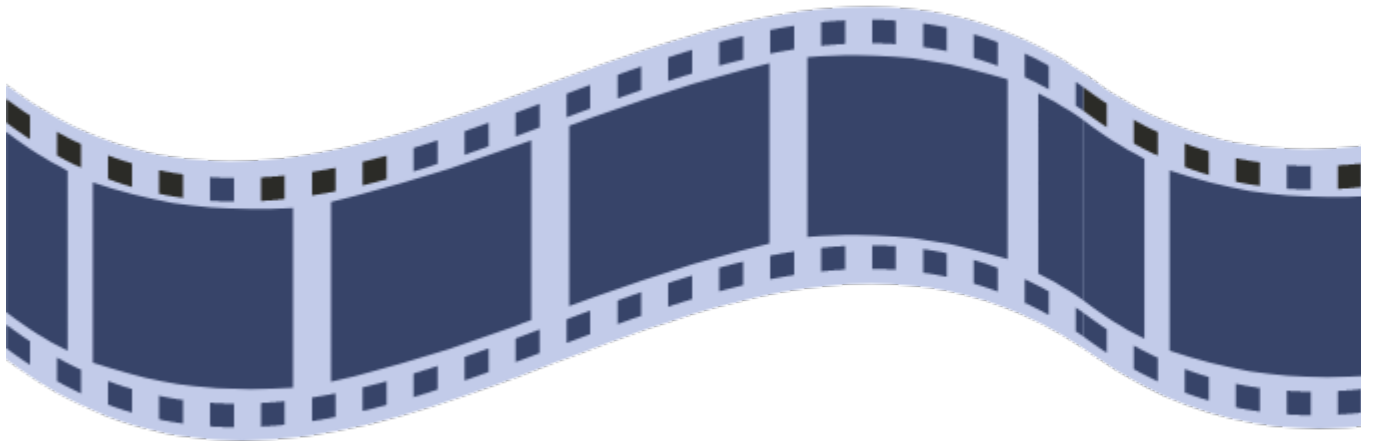
“Well,” George starts. Dream grabs the remote and turns the TV off so he can listen better. “I was thinking we would do something outside again today. That’s kind of what the fans want, after all the time we’ve been inside.”

“Fine with me. Dream, what do you think?”

“Sure,” Dream agrees absently, already wracking his brain for ideas. Something active, fun, outside but private. Something George would like.

They all sit in silence for a few minutes, thinking. Dream’s idea hits him suddenly and all at once.

“Oh,” he says. The others both look at him. “What do you guys think about tennis?”



It turns out, they’re terrible at tennis. Dream finds indoor courts to rent out so that no one will recognize them (and so they don’t have to go outside in the sweltering heat), and they head there after lunch.

“Why are we playing 2-v-1?” Sapnap complains as he serves the ball for the first time. “You guys always gang up on me.”

George lets out a guttural scream as he whacks the ball with all his might. It sails way over Sapnap’s head, ricochets off the wall twenty feet up, and narrowly misses Dream as it comes hurtling back towards them.

“On second thought,” Sapnap says, “you can keep George.”

Dream laughs. “I *want* to keep George.” *I want to put him in my pocket and keep him forever.*

You know. Just normal, sane thoughts that everybody has about their best friend.

George laughs it off. “Okay, idiot. Come on, let’s start filming.” He lifts the GoPro in his off-hand

up to his face and clicks the top button. “Hey guys! It’s my third day in Florida, and we’re playing tennis! I’m so good at tennis, I just *had* to wear my tennis gear.” He gestures to his red, white and blue headband. “Dream stole my wristbands, though.”

George in that headband should be a crime, Dream thinks. He looks so, so good, with his hair all pushed back, hanging slightly over the band. “You should wear that every day,” he says lightly. “It suits you.”

George beams. “Hear that, guys? Dream loves my headband.” He lowers his voice. “I think he wants to steal that, too.”

I don’t love the headband, idiot, Dream wants to say. *I love you*. He catches sight of the camera and keeps his mouth shut.

In the end, George eventually gets the hang of tennis, and he plays well—or at least, better than Dream and Sapnap.

“Dude, you were so terrible before,” Sapnap accuses. “Why are you suddenly good?”

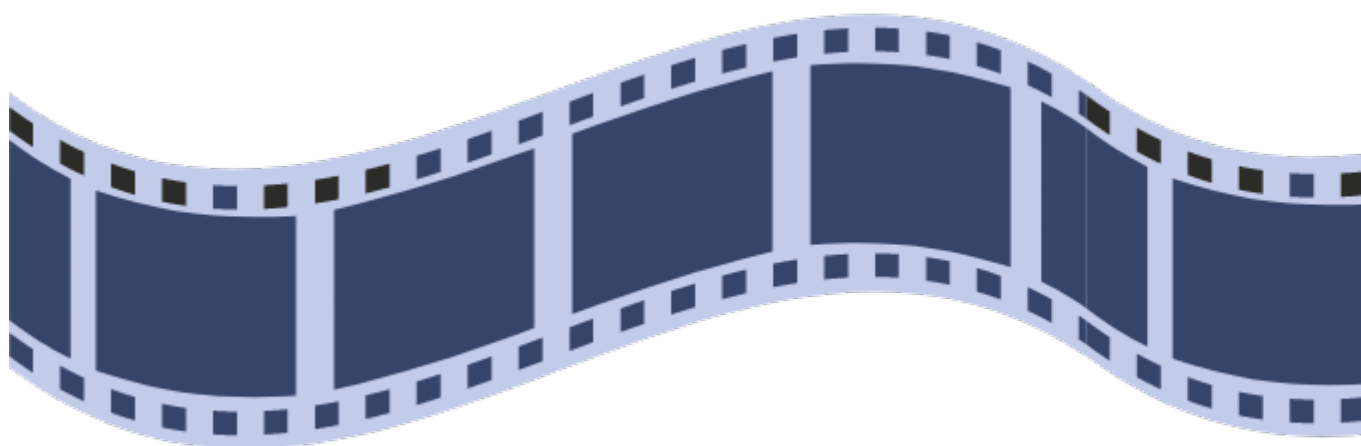
George shrugs. “I’m just good like that, I guess.”

“Actually, it’s probably because you took tennis lessons as a kid,” Dream guesses. “And now it’s kind of coming back to you. Muscle memory, and all that.”

Sapnap gives him a look. George just laughs and says, “I can’t believe you remember that.”

Of course I do, Dream wants to say. *I’m pretty sure you’re my soulmate*. Instead, he serves the next rally. “Haha, yeah. I don’t know why. I guess I just do.”

Sapnap coughs something that sounds suspiciously like *simp*, and misses the ball.



They’re all worn out after tennis. They collapse in the living room until it smells like socks, and then Dream makes everyone get up and take a shower.

George leaves first, and Sapnap corners Dream in the hallway. “Dude.” He says.

“Sapnap,” Dream responds, already nervous. “Can I... help you?”

“I heard you and George come out of his room together this morning.”

Dream has to try to hide a smile at the memory of them stumbling down the hallway together, sleep-clumsy and giddy with fondness. “Yeah,” he says. “Sorry, we were being kind of loud.”

“Did you fuck?” Sapnap asks, and Dream is so startled that he chokes on air and starts coughing.

“*What?*” He manages when the fit passes. “We— I— *What?*”

“Did you fuck?” Sapnap repeats stubbornly.

“God, no, what is *wrong* with you?” Dream chokes out. “We’re just— George wouldn’t— Why would you even think that?”

“You can tell me if you did, you know.”

“We *didn’t*,” Dream insists. “He just wanted company. I get it—I wouldn’t want to sleep alone if I moved halfway across the world, either.”

“Fine. Did you at least tell him how you feel?”

“No, and I’m not going to.” Dream tries to push past Sapnap, but he stands firm. “Move. I need to take a shower.”

“What you *need* is to talk to George. Aren’t you supposed to tell each other everything?”

“Yeah, well.” Dream huffs out a wry laugh. “Some things aren’t meant to be shared. Losing him would be... awful. And these feelings would be a ridiculous thing to lose him over. I mean, can you imagine what he would say?” He shudders, a million scenarios running through his mind.

Sapnap gives him a flat look. “He would say, ‘Wow, Dream. That’s great. I have romantic feelings for you, too,’” he deadpans.

Dream feels annoyance building in his chest, pushing at his ribs. “I’m not joking around, Sapnap. I thought you were going to be, like, normal about this. Can you just drop it?”

“I’m not joking around either.” Sapnap crosses his arms. “But if you want me to back off, fine.” He doesn’t sound fine.

Dream steps forward with a little more force this time, and Sapnap gets out of his way. “Fine. Let me go shower. I can handle my own love life, okay?”

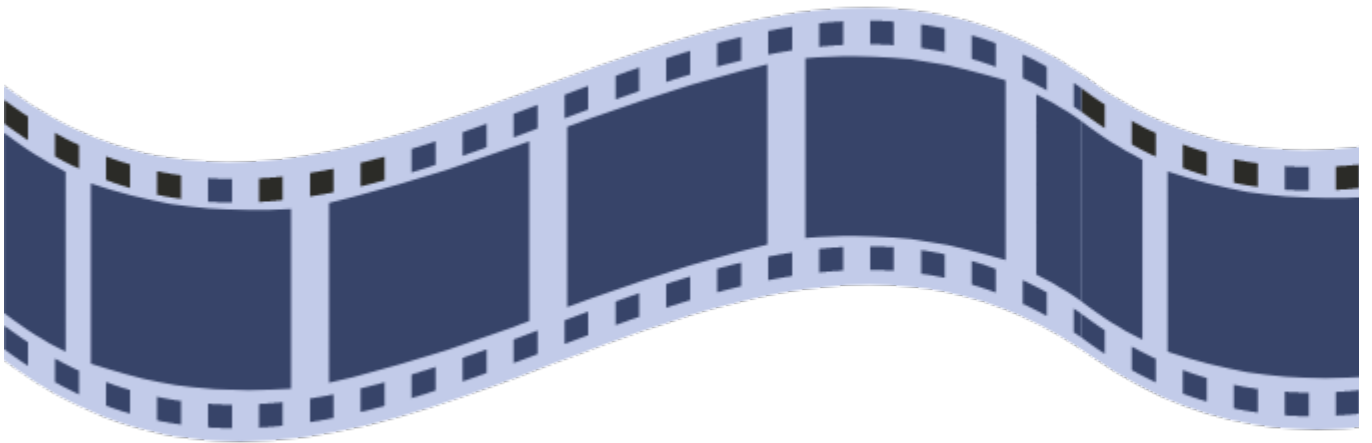
“It’s not just your love life,” Sapnap scolds. “It’s my home life. It’s all of our home lives.”

Oh. Dream softens a little bit, some of his anger melting away. “I didn’t really think about it that way,” he confesses.

“I know,” Sapnap says. “I’m just... I feel like stuff is gonna start getting weird if you keep trying to hide this from him.”

“I’m gonna try my hardest not to let any of this get between the three of us,” Dream promises. “Okay?”

Sapnap smiles, and it crinkles the corners of his weary eyes. “Okay.”



That night, when Sappnap goes to his meeting, Dream and George find *Mary Poppins* on Disney+ and settle on separate couches to watch.

They're quiet for a few minutes, and then George starts complaining. "This movie sucks," he says.

Dream blinks. "It's still on the opening credits."

"Okay?" George crosses his arms. "Well, who let them make the opening credits ten minutes long, anyway?"

"It's the overture," Dream huffs. "It has all the musical themes. It sets the tone for the whole entire movie. It's literally two seconds long." He pauses. "Okay, well, it's not *literally* two seconds long. It's probably about two minutes. But still."

George groans. "I want to watch *Minions*."

Dream ignores him.

George waits for an answer for about ten seconds, then falls over sideways on his couch. "It's cold in here."

Dream can't help but smile, remembering the morning. "Want me to come and be your blanket?" He jokes.

"Mm, yes."

His stomach flips. "What?"

"Come over here. Sit with me," George says, blinking at him sweet and slow. And it shouldn't work from all the way across the room, but fuck, it does. It really, really does.

He tries not to trip over himself as he goes to join George. For a moment he's tempted to actually lay on top of George, but then it occurs to him that he probably wasn't being serious. Probably. Right? He sits next to him carefully, and the only place they touch is where their elbows brush together.

“I want to— to hug again,” George mumbles.

An easy smile spreads across Dream’s face. “You can say ‘cuddle,’ you know,” he teases. “It’s not a bad word.”

George turns his face away, and Dream notices with a sick thrill that his ears are turning red. “Fine. Let’s... cuddle.” The word sounds strange and unnatural in his mouth, and Dream laughs at him.

“All you ever have to do is ask,” he says, putting an arm around George’s shoulders. He pulls him into his side a little more, and George plants his feet on the other side of Dream so his legs are on Dream’s lap.

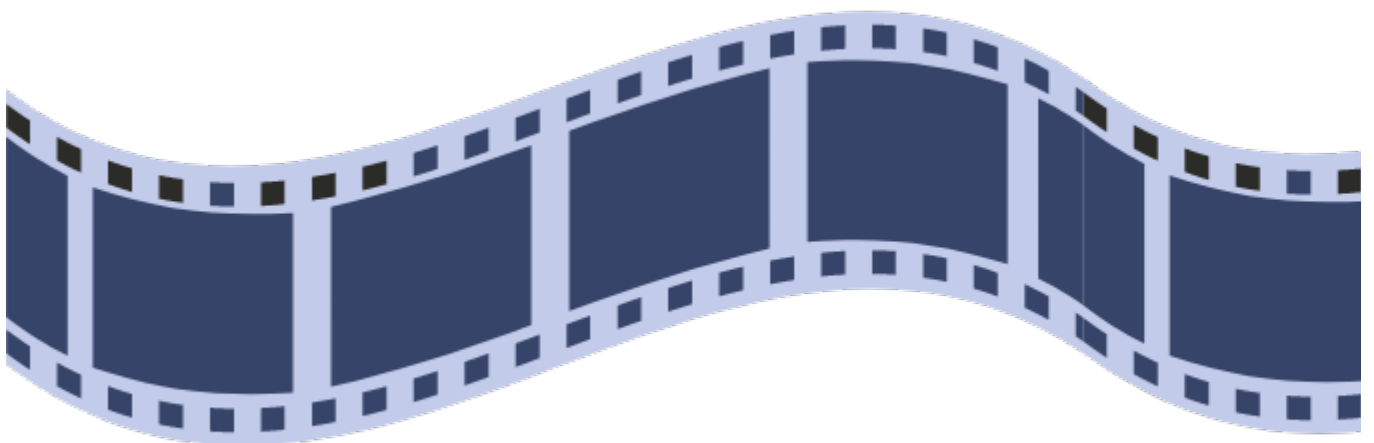
George has barely been here for 48 hours, but his presence by Dream’s side is already becoming a steady, comforting constant. Dream feels his heart begin to slow even as it soars. He belongs here, right next to George.

He leans his head back against the couch cushions, and as the movie finally begins properly, he feels George press the faintest kiss to his shoulder, where his shirt-sleeve has ridden up to expose his arm.

He glances over, astonished, but George is already looking at the movie again, face pointed firmly forward like nothing happened. He would almost think that he imagined it, if not for the phantom shape of George’s lips that he can still feel burning into his skin, and the flush he can see slowly creeping its way up George’s neck.

“*All right, ladies and gents,*” Bert says on screen, and Dream tears his eyes away from George.

It’s a good movie. As he watches, everything else falls away, until all he knows is the comfort of a familiar story and the warmth of George’s skin on his. When Mary Poppins slides up the stairs and they get to the line, *Close your mouth, Michael, we are not a codfish*, George laughs quietly to himself and reaches over to take Dream’s hand.



This time, Dream actually watches the movie. And he knows George does, too—he can feel him laugh at the funny parts, draw back and lean forward as the pace changes, and squeeze his hand when something sweet happens. They don’t talk; Dream never feels the need to. They just sit

quietly and soak it all in.

“Wow,” George says when it ends. “That was terrible.”

Dream laughs out loud, elbowing him. “You’re such an idiot. It was *not*.”

“Okay. It was fine.”

Dream sees right through him. “You loved it,” he crows. “It’s your new favorite movie. It’s *practically perfect in every way*.”

George lets go of his hand for the first time in almost two hours, standing up and walking to the kitchen. “It’s not. It’s, like, *extremely stubborn and suspicious*.”

Dream glances down at his own hand. It doesn’t *look* any different, but it feels as if it’s been branded with the shape of George’s palm pressed into his. He wipes the sweat on his shorts before he stands up and trails after George like a lost puppy.

“What are you doing?” He asks when George gets two glasses out of the cabinet and brings them over to the sink.

“What does it look like, idiot?” George says. And he fills a glass with water and hands it to Dream. “We played tennis earlier and we just watched two hours of TV. We’re obviously dehydrated.”

“Since when have you cared about staying hydrated?” But he drinks the whole glass anyway, and refills it when he’s done. He didn’t realize he was that thirsty.

George ignores him, drinking his own water on one of the counter stools. When he’s done, he leaves the glass on the counter and goes upstairs without another word.

“Come back here!” Dream yells. “You left your glass out.”

“Put it away for me!” Comes the distant reply.

“Well, when you put it so politely,” Dream mutters, and picks the glass up himself. Normally, he would be fine leaving dishes out, but with Patches in the house, he’s woken up to smashed glass and a puddle of water seeping into the hardwood a few too many times.

When both their glasses are safely in the dishwasher, he trudges up the stairs, legs tired and stiff after two days of activities that don’t involve a treadmill. He gets ready for bed, and when he’s done brushing his teeth, he wanders into George’s room.

It’s empty.

He stops in his tracks for a moment, stunned, then goes back to his room. He stops in the doorway when he sees that George is already in his bed, sitting up against the pillows and scrolling on his phone.

“Your room is the other one,” Dream deadpans. “It’s down the hall, second door on the left.”

George looks up. “Oh. Well, your bed is much more comfortable. I know we’re trying to break my bed in, but I think that’s really an every-other-night kind of thing. Don’t you?”

Dream chuckles. It’s just like George to want to sleep in the same bed as Dream every single night and *still* take up two rooms. But he’s a little surprised that George would just assume they’re sleeping together. “Wouldn’t we break in the bed much faster if it was being slept in every night?”

It's a genuine question, his practical nature speaking. "If we just each took one every night and we switched, then you could still spend half of your time in a comfortable bed."

George stares at him. "But... I thought..." he trails off, fiddling with his hands. Dream sees the moment a thought hits him, and he picks his head up, eyes narrowed. "Hey. Last night, you told me you would hug me to sleep, every night. How does your little plan account for that?"

Oh. Dream didn't think that far. "Huh," he says. "Guess we just have to do it your way." And he climbs into bed next to George.

George immediately puts his phone down and lays down on his side, looking over at Dream. "Hi," he says.

"Hey."

"This is—" George starts to laugh. "If you think about it, this is technically pillow talk."

"Pillow talk?" Dream wants to roll onto his stomach and scream into the pillow. Instead, he rolls onto his side to face George. "Isn't that for people who are, like, dating?"

"What?" George rolls his eyes. "That's definitely not true. Look, we both have pillows. And we're both talking. That's pillow talk."

Dream makes his voice all low and smooth. "So, what do you want to *pillow talk* to me about, Georgie?"

"Ugh, gross, don't call me that," George complains, cheeks glowing pink in the low light.

"Would you prefer 'idiot'?"

"Maybe. I... I dunno, I kind of like it. When you do that."

Dream's next breath catches in his throat. "Do what?" he asks, a little hoarse.

George turns away so Dream can't see his face. "When you call me an idiot. It's... nice. It's how I know you care."

His chest warms. "Of course I care about you. Idiot."

George turns back just enough so Dream can see the corner of his smile. "Shut up." When he next speaks, there's an uncertainty in his voice that's rare from him. "Is it time for my hug yet?"

Dream's stomach flips. *I love you*, his brain screams. It's bursting out of him at every seam. "Okay," he chokes out instead. "How do you want to... do it?"

George turns around and scoots back until he hits Dream's chest. "Put your arms around me," he orders.

Dream wonders weakly how he's supposed to live through this. But he wordlessly obeys, and George is warm and soft and dear in his arms, and he smells like himself, and Dream wants to breathe him in until he's dizzy with it.

"Dream," George whispers.

"I love you," he blurts out before he can stop himself.

Wait. Shit. Fuck. He wasn't supposed to say that.

"Dream," George repeats, ignoring him. "You forgot to turn the light off."

He deflates. "Okay. I mean, technically, that's your fault."

"What? How is that my fault?"

"You distracted me." He punctuates his words with a jab to George's ribs, and George elbows him in the gut. "*Ow*. I came in, and you were in my bed."

George laughs. "I forgot you've, like, never had anybody in your bed before, so you don't know how to handle it." He pauses. "Because you get no bitches."

Dream scoffs. "Okay, objectively speaking, that's just not true."

"Enlighten me, Dream," George says, turning in his hold to look him in the eye. "How is that not true? *I'm* certainly not one of your bitches."

"What? You're literally almost naked in my bed right now," Dream argues. "I would say that makes you my bitch."

"Your—" George swallows. "I'm not naked at all. I'm in my pajamas."

"Your pajamas, which do not include a shirt," Dream points out. "That's, like, at *least* half-naked."

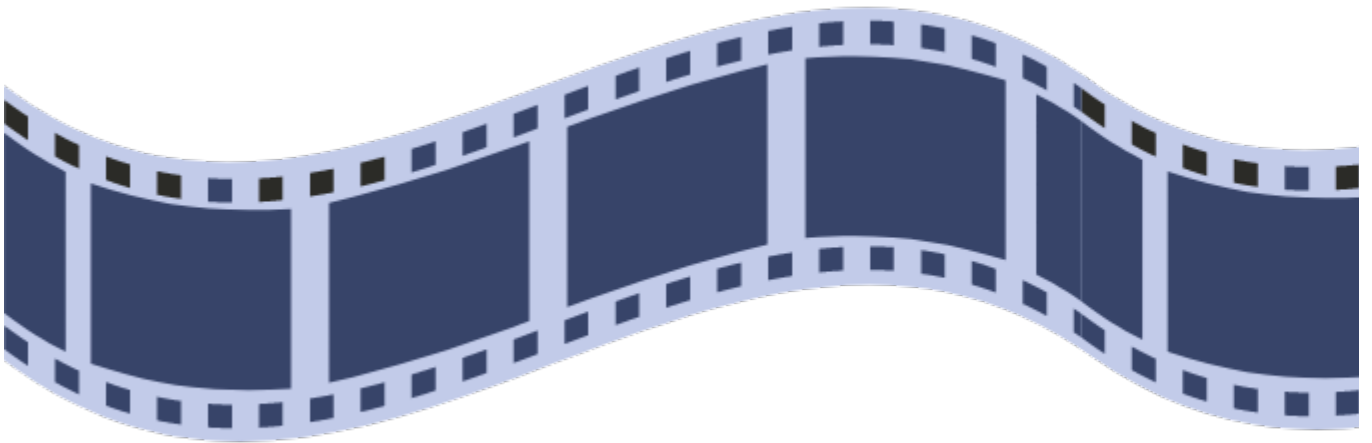
"Just turn off the stupid light, idiot." George turns back around. "Here, I'll help you get up." And he pushes Dream's arms off him, rolling away. "There. Now you have no reason to stay in bed. Go."

"*Fine*," Dream groans, standing up. He finds the light switch, and the room goes dark.

"I love you too," George says quietly. "By the way. I know I don't say it a lot."

Dream's reply gets stuck on the lump in his throat. He rushes back to bed, scooping George up in his arms and squeezing as tight as he can.

"What are you— Dream, let go of me, you idiot." But George hugs him back just as fiercely, and Dream can hear his smile. They lie back like that, and fall asleep in the embrace, George's head on Dream's chest.



There's no activity planned the next day. Instead, they spend the morning in the backyard trying to take pictures.

"George's eyes are closed in this one," Sapnap says, pressing buttons on the camera at its perch on his fancy tripod. "Can we please take *one* good one?"

"Take one of Dream kissing my cheek," George says, giggling. Dream has never been particularly religious, but he closes his eyes and prays for strength. Sapnap takes a picture of them like that, George laughing and Dream mourning the loss of his sanity.

"Okay, I'm putting the timer back on," Sapnap tells them. "Please be normal. Keep your eyes open."

"I'll consider it," George snarks back, and Sapnap hits the button and runs over. They pose for the same photo for what must be the tenth time: the three of them, Dream in the middle, arms around each other's shoulders, and broad grins on their faces.

"I think that was the one," Dream says after the click.

"Me too." George elbows him. "Now take one with each of us separately."

In the end, they end up with three: one of all of them, one of Dream and Sapnap holding hands, and one candid taken by Sapnap of Dream and George laughing their asses off. Dream likes the last one the best. He wants to print it out and put it in a frame on his desk.

He doesn't. That would be weird.

When the photos are saved to their phones, George disappears into his office, and Dream and Sapnap sit together in the kitchen.

"I'm kinda losing it," Dream admits.

Sapnap frowns. "Losing what?"

"My mind."

“Oh.” Sapnap leans forward. “Because of the face reveal?”

“Not really.”

“*Oh*. Because of George,” Sapnap says. It isn’t a question.

Dream nods anyway. “It’s like... I just think about it all the time. Me and him. And he—” he sighs exhaustedly, pushing his hair back out of his face. “He makes it so much worse. It’s not his fault, I know it’s not. But he wants to cuddle all the time, and he says these *things*, and I just can’t... I’m going insane.”

“Have you considered that he’s saying and doing this stuff because he likes you back?” Sapnap asks.

Dream scoffs. “Yeah, right.”

“I mean it.” Sapnap gives him a stern look. “Don’t brush me off. You might not want to believe me, but you should at least think about it. Promise me you’ll think about it.”

“I’ll think about it.”

“Thank you.” Sapnap smiles. “Want to play Fortnite? I can plug in my PS4.”

“Yeah, sure.”

George doesn’t come out of his office for lunch, so Dream brings him up a plate of food.

“Hey,” he says without looking up. Dream puts the plate on the desk next to him. “Oh. Thanks.”

“How’s editing going?” Dream braces himself for the answer. George is— okay, Dream loves the guy, but he’s the slowest editor in the entire world. He does a great job, but it’s definitely not worth all the time he spends perfecting every second. And he tends to lose motivation—Dream knows he’ll probably end up doing at least half of it for George, because he’s a simp and an idiot and way more than 67% in love with his best friend.

Instead of leaning back in his chair, sighing heavily, and launching into a tirade of complaints like Dream is expecting, George just shrugs. “Fine.” His eyes don’t leave the screen as he adjusts a clip until he’s satisfied.

Dream blinks. “Oh. Okay. See you later?”

“Mm.”

There must be something in his face when he goes downstairs, because Sapnap takes one look at him and stops chewing. “Is he okay?” he asks around a mouthful of pasta salad.

“He was really weird. He didn’t complain. He just kind of... ignored me.”

Sapnap laughs. “Oh no. You didn’t get your attention from George. Are you going to waste away?”

“Whatever,” Dream says, sitting down. “It’s fine. I just left him to it. I won’t bother him if he’s on a roll.”

And he doesn’t. The next time he sees George, it’s getting dark outside and he’s coming down the stairs, looking a little bit shell-shocked the way he tends to after he stares at a screen for hours at a time.

“George,” he says. “How are you?”

“Hungry.” George rubs at his eye, not looking at him. “Where’s my dinner?”

Dream smiles despite himself. “You aren’t going to say please?”

“No.”

“Okay. Do you want Chick-fil-a for dinner?”

George finally looks up, meeting Dream’s eyes. “That’s homophobic. I’m going to tell Twitter about this. I can’t believe you’re being homophobic right now.”

He scoffs. “Okay, fuck off. McDonalds it is,” he decides. “I’ll go pick some up. I’ll be a half hour, probably. Is there anything I can do in the meantime? Anything you need?” As much as it feels like George has always been with them in the house, glued to Dream’s side, he’s still very conscious of how new all of this is. He has to look after George, make sure he’s okay. It’s his responsibility as George’s friend.

“Actually, I could do with—”

“You have to say please, though,” Dream adds.

George is taken aback. “What?”

“If you want something,” Dream says. “You have to ask nicely.”

“Okay.” George’s throat bobs. “Please can I have a hug?”

Dream feels like an idiot. “Of course,” he says. “I’m sorry. You don’t even have to ask.” He steps forward, and George does too. He pulls George close, wrapping both arms around him. George doesn’t hug back—just rests his head on Dream’s shoulder and leans forward to let Dream support his weight.

“I don’t?” George says, and Dream feels his chin move against his shoulder.

“No. I’m giving you the okay. From now until eternity, any time you want to hug me, just come find me and do it.”

“Okay,” George whispers. His arms snake around Dream’s middle, and Dream is so fucking in love with him it brings tears to his eyes.

He sniffs, and George pulls back. “Are you *crying*?”

“No, I’m— I just missed you,” he confesses.

“Dream.” George laughs. “You’re so clingy.”

“Whatever. I’m gonna go pick up dinner.” He waits for George to offer to come with.

“Okay,” George says instead. “See you in a bit.” And he turns and disappears back up the stairs.

Dream blinks. *Oh. Okay.* But he goes and picks up McDonalds, and he wears a disguise but barely changes his voice as he goes through the drive-thru, and he’s making progress. By tomorrow, he’ll be able to go in public without worrying about being seen. By tomorrow, he’ll be able to stand in the middle of Times Square if he wants, with no fear or anxiety. Hopefully.

He makes it home and Sapnap sets the table with him. They call George down and eat together, chatting about their plans for future videos. At one point, George reaches over to swipe a bit of ketchup off of Dream's cheek. He's probably just looking at what he's doing, but Dream swears for a moment he feels George's eyes pass over his lips, and he licks them as a reflex. George immediately pulls back, looking away and wiping his hand on a napkin.

Dream is left reeling, and when dinner is over, he sits at the table on his own while George and Sapnap go back upstairs.

Dream's washing dishes later when George comes back down, walking up to him so quietly he jumps a foot in the air. "Jesus Christ," he swears, pressing a hand to his pounding heart. "George, you scared the crap out of me."

He turns, and George looks uncharacteristically serious. "Can I show you something?"

"Yeah, sure."

George takes him by the shoulders, marching him up the stairs and sitting him down at his desk. "So, you know how I was editing today," he says.

"Yeah."

"Well, I'm done."

"Done?" Dream turns in his chair. "Like... you don't want to do it anymore?"

"Like, it's all done. The video is done. I finished it."

"You're messing with me," Dream says. "You're lying."

"I'm not," George says, and he's laughing. "I did it all."

Dream starts laughing too. "You did it? How did you do that?"

"I just— I dunno, I just wanted to do it, so I sat down and did it."

Dream can't stop smiling. "Oh my god. I'm so proud of you."

"Can you please just— Can you shut up and watch it and tell me if it's okay?"

"Yeah," Dream says. "No, yeah. Totally. Yeah."

"Idiot," George says under his breath, and then he's clicking the play button and turning the chair a little so he can sit sideways across Dream's lap. Dream wonders how he's supposed to focus on the video with the love of his life on his lap, but then it starts, and he can't take his eyes away from it.

"Guys," on-screen-George says, eyes red-rimmed and puffy. "My visa got approved! I just— I was on call with Dream and it came in the mail!" He laughs and then sniffs, wiping at his eyes. "All I can think is *finally*. Finally, I get to go home."

Dream finds George's hand next to him in real life and picks it up, threading their fingers together. "You're home, George," he whispers.

"Shut up and watch the video," George huffs, but he squeezes Dream's hand so hard it almost hurts. They sit together as on-screen-George talks about packing up his apartment and buying plane tickets, and then Dream sucks in a breath when the next clip comes up and he recognizes George's

sweatshirt as the one he was wearing when they met.

“This is it, guys. My Uber is downstairs. It’s time to say goodbye to my little flat. I guess now I can show you guys all of it.” George takes the vlog on a little tour of bare, white walls and battered carpets. *It really is a tiny apartment*, Dream thinks. And then George is sitting in an Uber, and then he’s ‘queueing at Heathrow,’ as he puts it, and then he’s on an airplane, waving silently at the camera and pointing it out the window to show the terrifyingly vast Atlantic Ocean.

George gets a bystander to film the moment he sees Sapnap, and they hug and whisper to each other. Dream can’t quite make out what they’re saying. There’s a clip of them in the car—they *did* listen to Heat Waves, Dream notes with satisfaction—and then Sapnap’s opening the front door and stepping to the side where he can see both of them.

Embarrassment courses through him when he sees himself on film, the look on his face that will be picked apart and micro-analyzed until the end of time. His voice sounds strangled as he says, “Hello,” and then George says it back, and then Sapnap is laughing at them and then they’re hugging like they’ll never let each other go.

From there, it’s all familiar. He sees them eat breakfast, horse around in the pool, and play tennis, laughing and joking together all the way. But more than anything, he sees himself. Staring, stuttering, blushing. Gazing at George like he hung the moon and the stars and maybe even the sun itself. It’s a shock to the system, seeing all his love on film, laid out in front of him so he can’t ignore it.

Does George see it too?

And then he sees George at his desk. “Hey, guys,” he says. “This is my new setup, where I’ll be streaming from now on. I’m home now, and it’s a new age of content for the Dream Team. Thanks for watching! If you enjoyed, make sure to like this video and subscribe to my new IRL channel. Bye! Bye!” He waves, and the screen goes black.

The sudden silence roars in Dream’s ears. *Did George see? Does he know?*

“Well?” George ventures after a beat. “Was it... okay?”

Dream pushes his doubts away. “It was perfect.” He lets go of George’s hand to pull him into a hug. It’s a little awkward with George’s position on his lap, but they make it work.

“And did you... notice anything? Or have anything to say about it?” George presses. “Anything to tell me?”

Dream freezes. “No?”

George pulls away from the hug, turning his face away so Dream can’t see his expression. “Okay.” His voice is quiet, almost sad, but he shakes his head and normal George is back. “So. When should we post it?”

“Tomorrow,” Dream decides. “I’ll face-reveal at noon and you can post the video at one. What do you think?”

“It’s your face,” George says, turning to look at him again. “I think it’s a good idea. The fans will *definitely* need some time to process.”

Dream pulls back. “What’s that supposed to mean?”

“Just,” George won’t look him in the eye. “Just, nothing. It’s... whatever. It’s nothing.”

“Tell me!” Dream prods him in the ribs and he flinches away, swatting at his hand. “You said it, now face the consequences.”

“Fine.” George’s face is tinted pink. “You’re... like, the fans are going to go crazy. It’ll be like your hands all over again.”

“My hands.... You’re saying I’m—”

“Hot, Dream, yes,” George snaps. “Stop fishing, you know exactly what I’m saying. You have mirrors in this house.”

“George.” Dream laughs in disbelief, something like hope rising in his chest. “Oh my god. You can’t just drop that on me.”

“You say stuff like that about yourself all the time,” George says flatly. “When you killed Sapnap in Fortnite the other day, you screamed ‘Holy shit, I’m so hot.’ I heard it from upstairs.”

“I wouldn’t say that stuff if it was *true*,” Dream argues. “That would be totally weird.”

“I mean, it’s kind of weird anyway. But of course it’s true, you blithering idiot.”

Dream starts laughing. “Blithering idiot? Since when do you say that?”

“Since you started being one,” George says. After a second, he admits, “I saw it on Twitter.”

“Of course you did.” Dream tries to move his leg under George and winces. “Come on, get up. My leg’s asleep. And it’s bedtime anyway.”

“Bossy,” George comments, but he stands anyway, pushing down a little too hard on Dream’s shoulders to help himself up. It’s stupid, but it kind of makes Dream love him even more.

This time, they brush their teeth together, and George gets toothpaste all over his face. Dream teases him for it and pretends he’s not fighting back the urge to wipe it all off for him. They go to their separate rooms to change, and then Dream goes back into George’s room to find him already in bed, waiting.

I’m not going to live through this, Dream thinks. George, waiting for him in bed every night. George waking up next to him every morning. He wants that so, so desperately, and now that he has it he wants it even more. He thinks the ache of it might kill him someday.

He doesn’t tell George any of this. Instead, he turns off the lights and lies down next to him. “I can’t believe you edited an entire video in less than a day,” he says. “How did you even do that?”

“I mean,” George scoots forward a little and flattens out his pillow so he can lay down, “I’ve been working on it a little over the past few days. In the afternoons, I’ve been able to go off and edit for a few hours before dinner. But... I dunno. I just really wanted to get it done. I want you to face-reveal. I want you to be able to go out. I want you to take me out to dinner.”

Dream’s breath catches in his throat. “Take you out to dinner?” For a moment, he remembers Sapnap’s words. *Have you considered that he’s saying and doing this stuff because he likes you back?*

For a moment, he lets himself imagine it. Him and George, at a restaurant. George smiling at him,

face flickering in the candlelight. George leaning in, breathing the same air as him, pressing their lips together in a sweet, sweet ki—

“Yeah. And Sapnap, obviously. We can have a little family dinner,” George muses. He makes his voice all high and posh, like he’s talking to Quackity. “We’re just a little family.”

“Yeah,” Dream manages. “A little family.”

They lie in silence for a moment, then George speaks. “It’s not that dark in here,” he says.

“You don’t think?” Dream wonders how fast he can order blackout blinds on Amazon, if George’s curtains aren’t working well enough for him.

“Well, I mean, obviously it is dark. But it’s not pitch black.” George rolls toward him, and they’re face-to-face, inches apart. “There’s light coming under the door, and there’s the little light on the smoke detector, and there’s the tiniest bit of streetlight above the curtain.” He takes a breath. “I can almost see you.”

“Almost?”

“Yeah, I can kind of see your nose, and your mouth.”

Dream can see George’s mouth too. He sees it all day in his mind’s eye, the soft pink shape of it. He thinks about it every time he breathes. And now his own mouth burns under George’s watchful eyes.

“My mouth,” he echoes. He bites his lip. On purpose, as a joke. It’s just a joke, really, to see if George can actually see him. But George doesn’t laugh, or say anything. He just swallows audibly. Dream stops. “Are you tired?”

“Not really,” George breathes, and Dream can see him a little better now, the way his eyes glint in the low light. The way his mouth forms the words, “Are you?”

“No.”

In George’s bed, surrounded by his smell, close enough to feel the heat radiating off him, Dream burns, and burns, and *burns*. Surely... George won’t mind if he just steals one little kiss. Right? He can almost imagine it, the gentle brush of lips against his, the warm press of George’s mouth. Almost. But he doesn’t *know*. He needs to know what it’s like, what those lips feel like up close.

“I can’t stop thinking about the vlog,” George whispers. “I can’t stop thinking about it.”

Dream says nothing.

“Dream,” George begs. “What are you thinking about?”

“Kissing you,” Dream confesses without thinking. “It’s all I’ve thought about for the last four days.”

George freezes, going completely rigid, and Dream’s brain catches up with his mouth. Fuck. Fuck, fuck, fuck, he was not supposed to say that. “Fuck,” he says eloquently. “I didn’t— I’m not—” he rolls backwards, putting as much distance between him and George as he can until he falls off the bed, staggers to his feet, and flees from the room, slamming the door behind him.

He doesn’t stop until he’s safely in his own room, locking the door behind him and sliding down it

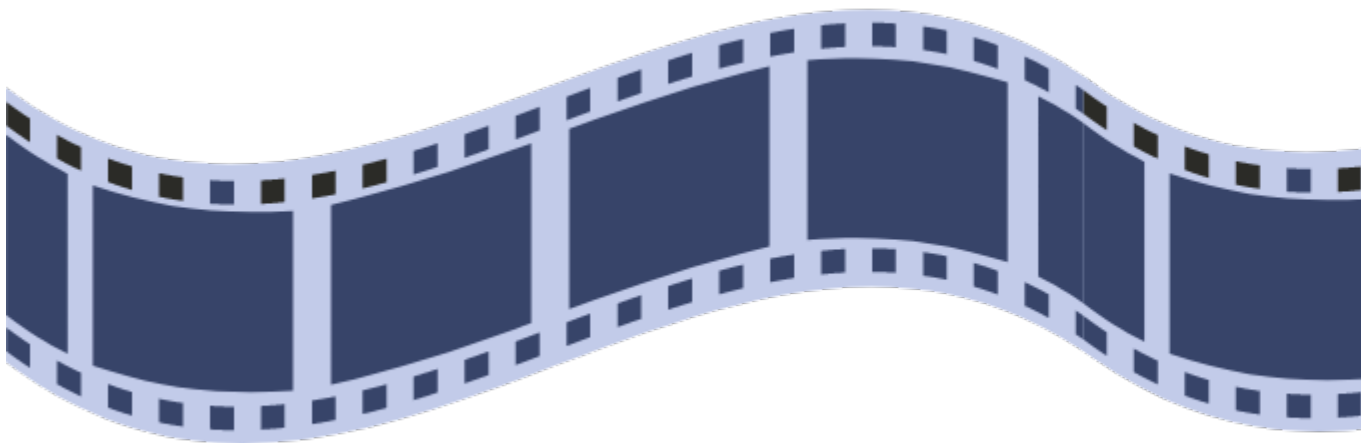
to the floor. He hears footsteps in the hallway, and then the sound of someone trying the door handle inches away from his head.

“Dream?” It’s George. A few seconds later, he knocks on the door. Dream is frozen in place. There’s one more knock, another minute of silence, and then those same footsteps retreat back down the hall.

Dream feels like shit, but even the thought of George out there alone isn’t enough to override the terror he feels at the thought of facing George after what he said.

He uses the door handle to pull himself up, and he stumbles over to his bed, which is cold and empty without George.

Dream stretches all the way out, taking up as much of the bed as he can, keeping the whole blanket to himself without George to steal it, and he feels absolutely zero satisfaction from it. He tosses and turns all night, and eventually falls into a fitful sleep.



He wakes up with tear tracks on his face and George’s name on his lips. It takes him a moment to remember why—why he dreamed about heartbreak, why he’s alone in his bed right now, why he can never look his best friend in the eyes ever again.

Kissing you. It’s all I’ve thought about for the last four days.

Ugh, why did he do that? If there’s a YouTube video out there of, like, *Top Ten Dream Epic Fails*, this would have to be on there. He told George he wanted to kiss him. And then instead of apologizing or trying to find an excuse, he ran away. He’d be surprised if George would even talk to him after doing something like that.

Not that he’s really interested in facing George right now. In fact, it might be best if he could just... *avoid* George for as long as possible. There has to be plenty of stuff he can do to stay away from George, right? He hasn’t gone grocery shopping in a while.

He goes, even though he hates leaving the house. He’s been trying to get out more recently, and he wears a hat and mask so nobody can see his face, but it’s still terrifying to be out there in the world. He might as well. By noon, the whole world will know his face.

He wanders the aisles aimlessly. He's not in much of a cooking mood, but he buys supplies to make Spaghetti Bolognese for George and Sapnap, just in case he gets up his nerve to ever go home again. He buys Sour Patch Kids, because he's not sure if they exist in the UK, but he thinks George would like them. He deliberately deepens his voice when he checks out, and the cashier looks at him like he's crazy, but it's better than being recognized. He's terrified someone is going to run up to him, rip off his hat and mask, and yell *It's Dream!*

It's kind of an irrational fear, he knows. It probably won't happen. Probably.

Somehow, he makes it to the car without anyone accosting him, and when he gets home, George and Sapnap are in the kitchen, eating cereal.

He freezes in the doorway, eyes locking with George's. "Um. Sapnap. Can you put these groceries away for me?" he squeaks, and then he runs for his life.

He locks his door and frantically rips his clothes off, hearing footsteps coming down the hall after him again. He's in running clothes and halfway through putting socks on when George knocks on his door. He opens it, hopping on one foot to get his other sock on.

"Dream—"

"Sorry," he blurts out. "Going for a run!" And he pushes past George, nearly tripping down the stairs before he puts on his stickers and bursts out the front door into the blinding sun.

There's a very good reason Dream prefers the treadmill to running outside. Even in the morning, the Florida heat is oppressive, and it must be close to a hundred degrees outside. The intensity of the sun makes the skin on his shoulders burn and the pavement shimmer in front of him. He's only been out for a few seconds, and he can already feel the sweat beading on the back of his neck.

With a sigh, he sets off, ignoring the way the humid air feels heavy and thick in his lungs when he tries to take a breath. There's a storm coming later. He can feel it.

He runs, and runs, and runs until the ache in his lungs matches the one in his chest. It's long, and hot, and awful, and Dream deserves every second of it. When he finds himself back on his own doorstep six miserable miles later, he's drenched in sweat and dizzy with exhaustion. He has to choke back the urge to puke all over the sidewalk.

And yet, when he looks at the doorknob, he almost wants to turn around and run another six miles. But he knows that he could run a hundred miles and still not forget what he did, what he *said*. From the moment he looked at George's sleeping face and saw everything he's ever wanted to the moment he set their friendship on fire and watched it burn, he's made more mistakes than he can ever count, more than he can ever atone for. But he has to face them at some point.

He steps forward, turns the knob. George is sitting at the kitchen counter. "Hello, Dream." The words are spoken evenly, tone measured.

Okay, well. Dream has to face George at some point, but he's not doing it right now. "Hi," he says, voice weak with equal parts exhaustion and shame, and he sees George's guard flicker for a moment. "I'm gonna— I have to go take a shower." He walks past him, making a beeline for the stairs.

"*Dream.*"

Dream freezes.

“Can we please talk,” George says. It isn’t a question.

“Not *now*,” Dream’s voice comes out sharper than he intends. “Sorry, that was.... Can I shower first? I’m really gross right now.”

“You have to drink water before you go take a boiling hot shower, Dream.” It sounds like an accusation. “You know, there’s a fucking *heat advisory* today. You were gone for ages.” George turns his head away sharply, and Dream can tell he’s blinking hard. He storms over to the cabinet and fills a glass with water.

He shoves it in Dream’s hand, and a little bit spills over the side. “Drink the whole thing. Slowly.”

“Fine,” Dream grits out, and okay, the room is feeling a little bit spinny. He makes it to one of the high chairs at the island, and his vision tunnels as he sips at his water. When he comes back into himself a few minutes later, his water is almost empty and George is pulling something out of the air fryer.

“What are you doing?” he mumbles.

George puts a plate down in front of him a little too roughly. “Eat,” he orders.

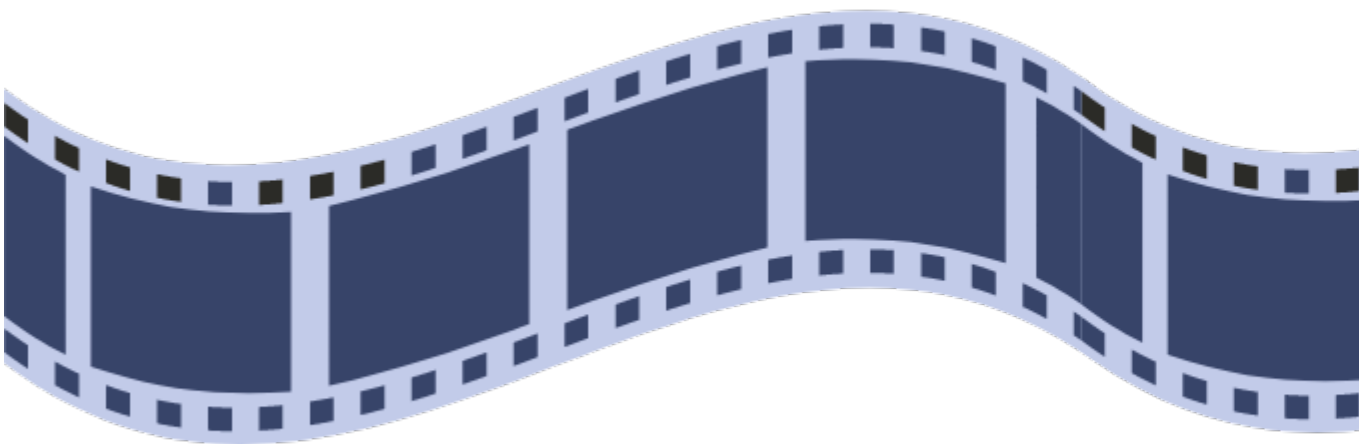
Dream looks at it. It’s... a single chicken strip. “Oh.”

“We’re having lunch soon,” George rushes out. “But you need to eat something. You look like you’re about to faint.”

I’m not a damsel in distress, Dream wants to say, but his mouth is already occupied by the entire chicken strip as he practically inhales it.

When he’s done and can think a little more clearly, he blinks up at George. “Thanks.”

George looks away. “Go shower. You smell really bad.”



“It’s lunchtime,” George says when Dream steps out of his room after his shower.

He jumps, doing a double take at where the boy is sitting on the hallway floor across from his

room. “George, you scared the crap out of me.” He presses a hand to his chest to feel his heart pound.

“Come and eat.” George stands and makes his way down the stairs. Dream trails after him, confused.

Sapnap is already sitting at the kitchen table in front of three plates, each one with a sandwich and some apple slices. “Hey,” he says. He sounds normal. He doesn’t sound like he knows about... whatever is going on. Dream’s not sure if *he* knows what’s going on.

He doesn’t say any of this. Instead, he just nods to Sapnap and sits down, starting on his sandwich. It tastes like cardboard. They eat in deafening, choking silence.

“We’ve been eating so healthy since George got here.” Sapnap finally breaks the silence, putting his mostly-eaten sandwich down. “All home-cooked meals and shit.”

“Yeah,” Dream says. George says nothing. Dream stares at him for a second, and oh, he looks mad.

Sapnap looks up at them, mouth full, and wrinkles his nose. When he finishes chewing, he asks, “Why are you guys being so weird?”

“You’re the weirdest person here,” George argues, looking down at the table. “You’re, like, the pot calling the kettle black or something.”

“The *keh-tul*,” Sapnap mimics, and the silly accent he uses makes Dream think of Quackity. “Put some tea in the *keh-tul*.”

George giggles, and Dream can almost forget about their sort-of-fight when they’re all together like this. “What? You put *water* in the kettle, Sapnap, not *tea*.”

“*Woo-tah*,” Sapnap snickers. He stuffs the last of his sandwich in his mouth before speaking, crumbs flying everywhere. “But, guys, I’m serious. What the hell’s going on?”

“Nothing,” George says.

Dream remembers his conversation with Sapnap. “It’s okay, dude,” he tells him quietly, not missing the way George stares. “We’re gonna talk about it. It’s gonna be okay.”

“In that case, I’m gonna go.” Sapnap stands up, leaving his apple slices uneaten on his plate. “You two. Talk.”

They both watch him as he puts his plate beside the sink before disappearing down the hall.

George sighs. “So... are you done avoiding me?” His eyebrows are drawn together, but he looks more sad than angry.

Dream feels a hot stab of guilt, and he bows his head in shame. “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to upset you.”

“It’s okay. Can we just talk, though? Like, can we please just talk about things? I don’t like it when you run away.”

George is being uncharacteristically open and honest, and it makes Dream feel even worse.

“You’re right. I’m sorry. I’m sorry for everything. God, I wish I could just take it back. Can we go

back to before it happened?”

George’s face falls. “You want to take it back?”

“Well, yeah. I didn’t mean to say any of that.” Dream wants the ground to open up and swallow him whole.

“You didn’t *mean* it.” George looks away. “Okay. Right. Fine.”

Dream is so, so tempted to leave it there, to go back and move on and salvage their friendship, but he can’t lie to George’s face. “Well, okay, technically– technically, it’s true. I just didn’t mean to say it *out loud*. I didn’t want to freak you out. And then I said it, and it did freak you out, and... I’m sorry.”

“I don’t think you get it,” George says, voice tight.

Frustration lights up in his chest, and he’s so relieved to feel anything but pure adoration towards George that he latches onto it. “I don’t get it? No, George, I don’t think *you* get it.”

George glares at him, and his anger is so familiar that it makes all this uncharted territory just a little bit easier to navigate. “Enlighten me, then. What’s the big deal about wanting to kiss me?”

Dream stands up, taking his plate over to the sink. “Because, George. I wouldn’t just kiss you *once*. If you let me kiss you, I’d have to do it again, and again, and again. I’d go crazy thinking about it. All the time, every day. I already do.”

“It,” George echoes faintly. He picks up his own plate and follows Dream to the sink.

“You and me,” Dream huffs. “Together. Like, *really* together. I want to be so much more than your best friend. I want everything with you. You make me feel so fucking greedy, you know that? You walk into a room, and I just *want*. I want you so bad.”

“You want me,” George breathes. He puts down his plate.

Dream can’t bring himself to look at George’s face. He feels like he’s lit himself on fire for George’s entertainment, and there’s nothing left to do except burn. “You have no idea how I feel about you. None. And you...” he finally meets George’s eyes, and he takes an involuntary step backwards. “Um. You’ll never understand. I wanted to hide this from you. I wanted to save our friendship. But–” George takes a step forward, and Dream takes a step back– “But, you make everything so fucking difficult. I was trying to be normal, and you were, like...” he loses his train of thought. “Like–”

George pushes him into the fridge and kisses him.

It takes him by surprise. His lips are dry, his eyes are open, and his heart is in his hands, bleeding out.

George pulls back when he doesn’t reciprocate.

“Um,” Dream says. “What?” He licks his lips, hoping to taste George on them. He doesn’t.

“You idiot,” George says. “I’m trying to tell you something.” And he leans in again, slower this time. Giving Dream a chance to back out.

Dream finally processes that he’s being given an opportunity to kiss George, and this time, he leans

in too, meeting him in the middle. It's a cautious kiss, so slow and careful it almost ruins him. George is warm and soft and sweet, and wait, *I'm trying to tell you something*, does that mean... that George... he pulls away.

"You *love* me," he accuses. Then he catches himself. "Wait, not— it doesn't have to be love if you're not ready for that. It could just be *like*, or—"

"Dream." George is smiling now, a big genuine ear-to-ear grin. "Yes, I love you. I swear, you are the dumbest man alive." And then he's up on his tiptoes for another kiss, and Dream's whole body floods with warmth, and then he's basically just smiling into George's mouth.

"Can you please cut that out?" George complains. "I swear, for someone who's wanted to kiss me since I got here, you are the least willing participant I've ever encountered. I'm basically just kissing your teeth."

"I'm so in love with you," Dream says. "I can't stop fucking smiling." He leans his head against George's, and they stand there forehead-to-forehead in the middle of the kitchen, just laughing.

"Your breath smells like ham sandwiches," Dream tells him eventually, and George shoves him away.

"You are so fucking gross, Dream." He looks at Dream with such blatant adoration in his eyes that Dream can't do anything but tip his head back and laugh.

"What's up?" Sapnap says from the doorway, and they both look at him.

Dream glances over at George to try and gauge what he's thinking. Are they going to say anything, or—

"Dream is the worst kisser in the world," George announces unceremoniously. "All he wants to do is put his face on mine and giggle."

Dream's jaw drops. "What the hell, George? I'm not giggling, I'm *happy*. You're such a jerk."

"I'm not a jerk, you're a jerk. If you're gonna say things like that to me, I'll never kiss you again."

"I'm sorry I asked," Sapnap mutters. He catches Dream's eye. "Whatever you do, dude, don't look in a mirror. You're grinning like fucking Pennywise or something."

Dream groans. "Leave it to you two to be this mean to me when I'm finally happy. You're a bunch of—" he's cut off by his phone ringing.

"Who's calling you?" Sapnap says, and Dream pulls his phone out of his pocket. It's not a call, it's an alarm. *Face reveal*, it says.

"Oh, shit," George says. "It's 11:59."

"Shit," Dream echoes. He pulls up Instagram, but his hands are shaking too badly and he almost drops the phone. He hands it to George. "Can you do it?"

He watches over his shoulder as George picks out the three photos, crops them, and tags himself and Sapnap. Dream realizes he never came up with a caption, but George is already typing one in. A blue heart, a green heart, and an orange heart.

"Oh," Dream says. "I love it."

Sapnap inspects it. “Yeah. It’s perfect.”

George’s thumb hovers over the *Share* button. “Yeah? Should I post it?”

“No, dude.” Sapnap takes the phone out of his hand and passes it to Dream. “Let him do that.”

Dream closes his eyes and takes a shaky breath. “Okay.”

He posts it.

Immediately, George and Sapnap erupt into cheers, nearly tackling him with a group hug, jumping up and down. “You did it!” Sapnap yells, right in his ear.

“You’re free,” George marvels.

“I’m free!” Dream tips his head back. “Fuck, yes. Let’s go out to dinner tonight. In public. With no hats.”

“Well, I might wear a hat,” Sapnap says, and they both laugh at him. “Guys, shut up. Dream, give me your phone.”

“What? Why?”

Sapnap snatches it out of his hand. “I love you. And I’m happy for you. But I think we should all stay off the internet for now. At least until George posts his vlog in an hour. George, do you think you can distract him until then?”

A possessive hand wraps around his bicep. “I think we’ll find a way to pass the time,” George drawls, slow amusement dancing across his features.

“On that note, I’m out of here,” Sapnap grouses. “You guys are fucking revolting.”

George pulls him over to the couch. “You okay?”

Dream blinks, still in a daze. “It’s a little surreal,” he manages. “My face is gonna be on the internet. It feels like I leaked it by accident.”

“You didn’t. You made a well-thought out decision, and it’s gonna be okay. Why don’t we talk about something else?”

“Like your feelings?” Dream challenges, knowing George won’t go there with him.

“Sure. If you want.”

He blinks. “Really?”

George scoffs. “Since I got here, I’ve been so obvious. Dropping hints, leaning in.... I gave you a hundred different chances to kiss me. And you never did.”

“That was *on purpose*?” Dream is dizzy for a whole new reason. “You’re *such* an asshole. You were driving me crazy. I had to stop myself from kissing you, like, ten times a day. I almost gave in so many times. You were all I wanted. If you knew I liked you, why didn’t you say something?”

“I was scared I was wrong,” George admitted. “But you kept sleeping in my bed, and then I edited the vlog...” he trails off, leaning over to give Dream another chaste kiss. It feels just as good as all the other ones. “When I watched it back, I was so sure that it wasn’t all in my head. That you liked

me too. But then you didn't say anything about it."

"Okay, well. I didn't want to make things weird."

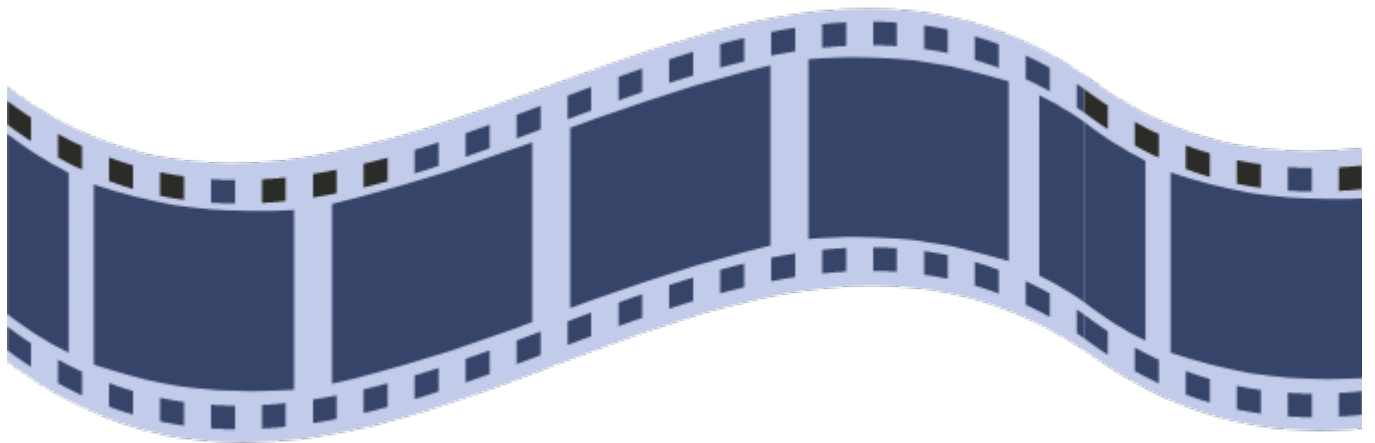
"You didn't think staring at me all day was already making things weird?" George grins. "You agreed to sleep with me every single night."

Dream reaches a hand up to cradle his face, and they kiss again, and again, and again. "That was a terrible excuse, by the way," he says when he remembers how to talk. "You said you needed my help to *break in your bed*."

George shrugs. "It worked, didn't it? I see no problem with that." And he hauls him into another heart-stopping kiss.

"I know a way we could *really* break your bed in," Dream says.

George flushes scarlet. "*Dream*."



They kiss for... honestly, the better part of the hour they have to wait. When George stands up to go get water, Dream is flushed and dazed and so in love.

"Why are you looking at me like that?" George says when he comes back with two glasses. "Your eyes are like love-hearts."

"Love-hearts," Dream mimics. "You're so cute."

"What do you want me to say?" George grumbles. "*OMG, heart-eyes emoji!*"

Dream laughs. "Shut up. Come on, let's go upstairs."

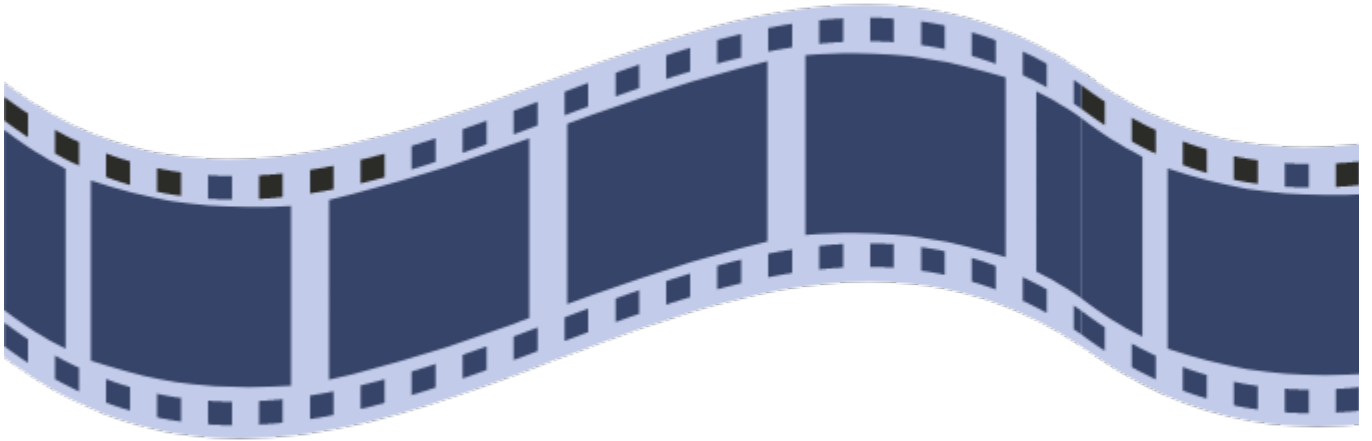
"Upstairs?" George raises his eyebrows. "Dream, how forward of you."

Dream is going to spontaneously combust. "To post the video," he clarifies, face burning. "Let's go upstairs to post the video."

"Oh. Well, that's fine, too." George grabs him by the hand and leads him to his office. "You know

when people see this, they're going to know you're in love with me, right?"

"You're giving them way too much credit." Dream trails after him, matching every step. "How would they possibly know?"



Twitter is a wreck that night. *DREAM FACE REVEAL* is number one on the Trending page. *DNF* is number two.

"Okay, so maybe the fans *could* tell I'm in love with George," Dream concedes at dinner. They're eating at an Olive Garden, where the hostess stared at them for a full ten seconds when they walked in and then immediately rushed them to a secluded corner.

"Gee, who saw that coming?" Sapnap deadpans. "Certainly not me."

"Oh my gosh, look at this one!" George is still on Twitter. "*The way Dream looks at George in his tennis headband,*" he reads. "And it's just this photo of your face!"

Dream looks at it. "Yikes." He *does* look obsessed. "In my defense, have you seen yourself in that thing? It's almost as good as you with wet hair."

Sapnap rolls his eyes. "You guys either need to reveal your relationship to the public immediately, or get a hell of a lot better at acting."

"I mean... why not just embrace it?" On his own phone, Dream finds the same tweet and types out a reply. He shows it to George, who immediately starts laughing.

"Sure," he says. "Let's just... tell everyone. There's no point in trying to keep us a secret when Dream can't keep a secret to save his life. Just do it, Dream. Send tweet."

"Send tweet," Dream repeats. He does.

Sapnap's phone immediately lights up with the notification. "Oh my God, Dream. '*Can you blame me?*'" he reads out. "Dream, that's a *lot* of drooling emojis."

George grins. "I think it's a reasonable amount."

“You guys are so gross,” Sapnap laughs. “Are you gonna at least keep the PDA to a minimum on-camera?”

Dream nods slowly. “Yeah, that’s just for us, I think.” He glances over at George.

“Uh-huh.” George smirks. “And Sapnap when he’s unlucky enough to walk in on it.”

Sapnap shudders. “Please keep that shit away from me. Lock your door or put a sock on it or something.”

“You don’t want to join?” George asks with a fake pout, reaching out to put his arm around Sapnap’s shoulders.

Sapnap pretends to gag and pushes George away from him. “Get off, you stupid British idiot.”

George stops. “That’s it. I’m never speaking to you again.”

Dream laughs out loud. “C’mon, guys. Who wants dessert?”

End Notes

thanks for reading, guys! if you enjoyed, be sure to give this kudos, since i spent a million years writing this fic. share your thoughts with me in the comment section below, or come visit me on [twitter](#)!! i love to hear any and all thoughts you guys have. also remember to user sub if you haven't already, because i have a LOT more dnfing on the way. love you guys! xoxo, goose

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!